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ABSTRACT

Initially, Wisconsin Works (W-2) emphasized moving people from welfare to W-2 and employment. Eventually, recognition of the important role of education and training in moving families to self-sufficiency was renewed. The goal of W-2 is to connect its broad client population (only 17% of whom have a high school diploma) with appropriate work or work training as soon as possible by placing clients into the most appropriate of the following options: unsubsidized employment, trial jobs, community service jobs, and W-2 transitions. The Governor's W-2 Education and Training Committee has focused on the following issues: best practices; employers as partners; provision of flexible, entry-level education and training; the importance of retention and sustained employment; upward mobility; and continuing education and the importance of lifelong learning. The committee's action plan to promote and enhance education and training opportunities available under W-2 calls for strengthening support for continuing education and lifelong learning and emphasizing the following: available education and training opportunities, the importance of earning a high school diploma or its equivalent; and the need for W-2 agencies to forge broad-based partnerships with employers, education and training providers, and all available funding sources. (MN)

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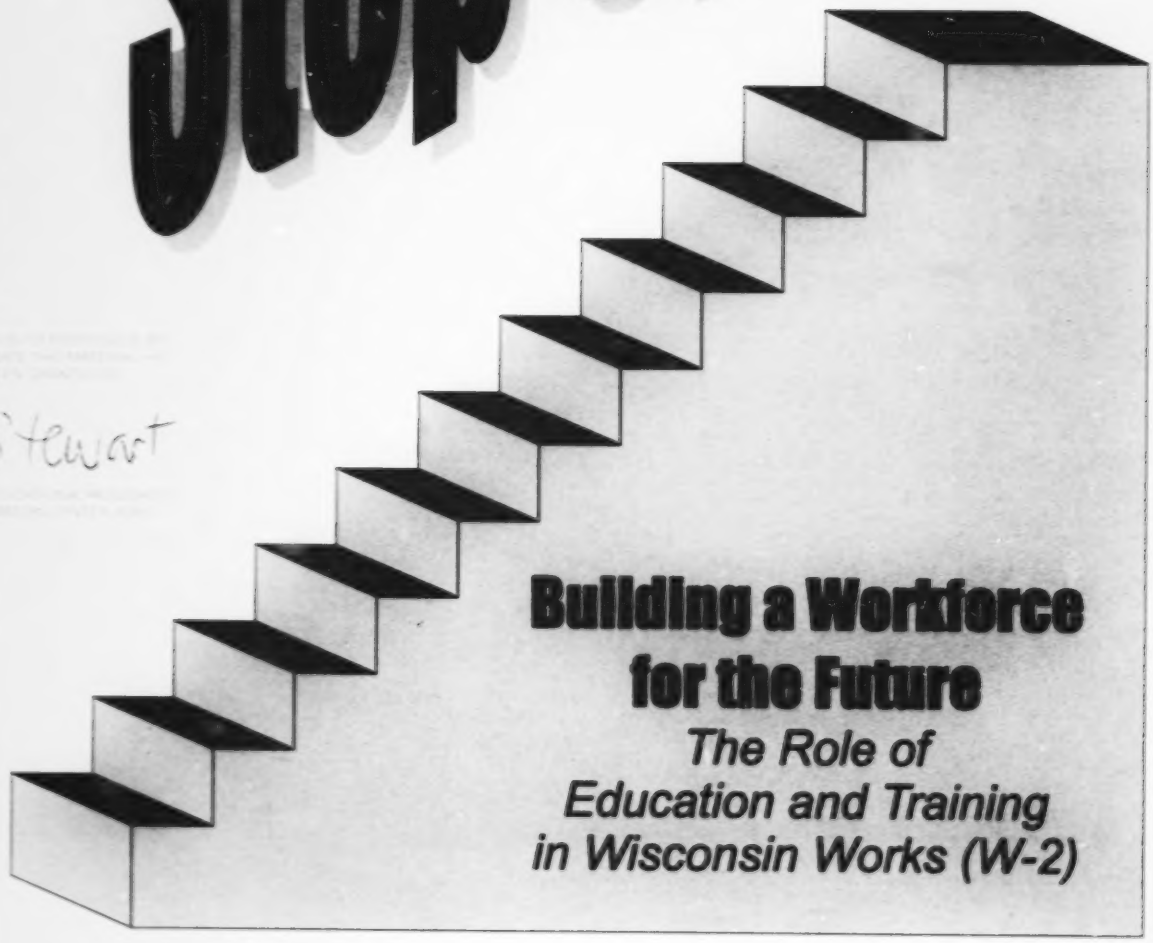

Building a Workforce for the Future

The Role of Education and Training in Wisconsin Works (W-2)

A Report by the Governor's Wisconsin Works (W-2) Education and Training Committee

June 1998

LStewart

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Step Up

Building a Workforce for the Future

The Role of Education and Training in Wisconsin Works (W-2)

A Report by the Governor's Wisconsin Works (W-2) Education and Training Committee

June 1998

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Preface

In answering the challenge to build a stable and productive workforce for the future, it is critical not only to move citizens into the workforce, but also to support them when they get there so they can sustain and advance in their employment . The creation of the Governor's Wisconsin Works (W-2) Education and Training Committee was a result of Governor Thompson's commitment to help people enter the workforce and move to self sufficiency.

Of current W-2 participants, only 17% have earned a high school diploma or its equivalent.

In order to do this successfully, we first need a basic understanding of the population W-2 is intended to serve. National statistics point to a few consistent poverty indicators: having a child before marrying or turning 20 years old, and not completing high school. This is noteworthy because, of current W-2 participants, only 17 percent have earned a high school diploma or its equivalent. Keeping in mind that sometimes even those with a high school diploma don't have the math and reading competencies expected of a high school graduate, it's clear that meeting the basic education needs of the W-2 population is of critical. One way to accomplish this is to encourage and support a wide array of education and training opportunities, including continuing education and lifelong learning.

In addition to basic math and literacy skills, Wisconsin's employers have repeatedly identified some key abilities required of a successful worker. These include the ability to communicate effectively with co-workers and supervisors, to take direction, to work as part of a team, to work productively, and to be dependable, among others. These are often referred to as "soft skills". These types of skills, coupled with basic education, prepare people for *employment*, not one specific job.

Work makes learning meaningful, allowing people to apply new knowledge and see its importance in their lives and in the workplace.

Due to the knowledge and experience gained from previous work programs and welfare reform efforts, W-2 emphasizes a two-pronged approach: work or work experience training combined with education. Work makes learning meaningful, allowing people to apply new knowledge and see its importance in their lives and in the workplace.

While education alone is not the answer, workforce attachment alone is generally not the answer either. If current participants don't work toward the basic education and skills necessary for job retention and advancement, their chances for sustained employment may not be as good. Combining work with education and training is an approach that

most often yields the type of long-term results we're looking for in Wisconsin. Again looking to past work programs, the most successful activities were job skills training and on-the-job training (OJT), where education and training activities were combined in a work environment.

For the many who cannot attend at traditional times or sites, workshops, classes and training must be flexible.

Successfully meeting the education and training needs of those who are working requires flexibility. Workshops, classes and training must account for the many who cannot attend at traditional times or sites. Creating opportunities to participate in education and training at the worksite or in neighborhoods will best serve the participant. Further, opportunities must accommodate various schedules and different learning styles and abilities by allowing people to participate according to their specific schedules and needs.

Effective partnerships are the cornerstone of successful W-2 education and training initiatives.

Effective partnerships are the cornerstone of successful W-2 education and training initiatives. Cooperation between W-2 agencies and Job Centers, employers, organized labor, technical colleges, private industry councils, community based organizations (e.g., those that offer literacy and English-as-a-Second Language tutoring, libraries, vocational rehabilitation, etc.) and many others is crucial. A strong relationship with the local employer community can ensure that customized training programs result in the type of long-term results both participants and employers want. It can also provide answers to child care and transportation concerns, and support important worksite mechanisms such as mentoring and Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs).

In meeting its charge, the Governor's Wisconsin Works (W-2) Education and Training Committee was encouraged by the number of innovative ways that services are currently being delivered by partnerships throughout the state. The work of the Committee focused on clarifying current policy, providing examples of policy implementation, and recommending strategies for further improving the delivery of education and training within the scope of W-2.

GOVERNOR'S WISCONSIN WORKS (W-2) EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

Charge

Identify the flexibility and kinds of initiatives that can be included in providing entry-level workforce training under Wisconsin Works (W-2). Specifically:

- *Clarify the options available under the scope of W-2 and Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET)*
- *Identify best practices and ideas we can share*
- *Identify what employers say they need, and develop guidelines that agencies should focus on for workforce readiness*
- *Provide guidance on what educational institutions can do to be more responsive to employers and customers related to entry level training and continuing education*
- *Identify what W-2 agencies and their partners can do to facilitate continuing education and post employment occupational training (or post employment customized training)*
- *Identify entry level training needed for areas with a labor shortage and with good paying job opportunities*
- *Provide presentations and technical assistance on creative employment and training initiatives which would fit under W-2; for example, public/private ventures which offer to provide training assistance on workforce development to our state (part of Ford/Mott grant).*

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Executive Summary

As of April 1998, the conversion from Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) to Wisconsin Works (W-2) was complete. During the conversion period a great deal of emphasis was placed on moving people to W-2 and to employment. Caseloads have declined dramatically, as many of those able to go to work have done so.

The formation of the Governor's Wisconsin Works (W-2) Education and Training Committee signaled a renewed recognition of the important role of education and training in moving families to self-sufficiency. Current economic prosperity and low unemployment rates in Wisconsin provide an invaluable opportunity to develop our workforce. While strong education and training provisions exist in current W-2 policy, the Committee recognized the need for a renewed effort to increase the understanding of, and support for, current provisions, as well as the enhancements the Committee has recommended.

W-2 education and training provisions potentially serve a very broad population, one that includes nearly 15,000 W-2 participants and approximately 16,000 whose participation in Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) is mandatory. This population will almost certainly continue to grow as people become increasingly aware of how they can take advantage of available services.

With these considerations in mind, this diverse Committee consistently returned to several clear themes, reflected throughout the report and in the recommendations:

- ✓ Education and training, an important component in moving families to self-sufficiency, should be effectively incorporated into employability and career planning.

- ✓ Earning a high school diploma or equivalent is a critical need. No effort should be spared in making this achievement a reachable goal for anyone willing to work toward it.

- ✓ Strong, employer-based partnerships are vital in order to provide education and training to a population increasingly at work.

- ✓ Flexibility in the provision of valuable education and training is essential in order to accommodate those who are working, and those with different learning styles.

✓ Continuing education and lifelong learning must be consistently stressed in order to ensure that placement, sustained employment, and advancement become the rule, not just the success story.

✓ Child care and transportation are critical supportive services that need to be primary considerations in creating education and training opportunities.

Background

The goal of W-2 is to connect people with appropriate work or work training as soon as possible. This is done by placing those eligible on the appropriate rung of the W-2 "employment ladder". This ladder consists of four rungs, or employment options:

- *Unsubsidized Employment*
- *Trial Jobs*
- *Community Service Jobs (CSJs)*
- *W-2 Transitions (W-2 Ts)*

In addition to employment search and placement assistance, W-2 provides an improved delivery system and better access to the supportive services needed to sustain employment. This includes provisions that encourage participation in education and training opportunities appropriate for the individual.

Since December 1995, the number of participants with a high school diploma has dropped from 51% to 17%.

In considering the findings and recommendations of this report, it is important to bear in mind the demographics of the target population. Statewide, the average age of the W-2 participant is 29.6 and the average family size is 3.4 persons. As of January 1998, 71.7 percent of female W-2 participants have never married. In determining how Wisconsin can best serve the education and training needs of current W-2 participants, a primary concern is the fact that only about 17 percent have earned a high school diploma or equivalent. This is a significant shift from the approximately 51 percent of AFDC participants mandatory for work programs who possessed a high school diploma or equivalent in December 1995. This reality has a serious impact in terms of structuring a program that addresses the needs of the majority. Discussion of postsecondary education is premature for the vast majority of participants.

In early 1998, a need to clearly define the role of education and training in W-2 was identified. There is considerable interest in the clarification of current opportunities for education and training, including:

- basic educational development that leads to a high school diploma or equivalent;

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- training in the "soft skills"--for example dependability, responsibility, and teamwork, among others--skills necessary not only to enter the workforce, but to sustain employment and realize advancement; and
- continuing education and lifelong learning.

The needs of the clear majority are best served not only by opportunities to gain valuable work experience, offered through W-2, but also by achieving basic education and skills. Economic reality often dictates that those with a high school diploma will earn more than their counterparts without, and will be better able to retain employment during economic downturns. These considerations help to frame the W-2 education and training philosophy--a two-pronged approach that combines work with education and training. Experience tells us this approach offers the greatest opportunity for success in both pursuits.

Past work program experience in Wisconsin and elsewhere indicates that education alone rarely leads to workforce attachment.

Delaying an attachment to the workforce, in favor of full-time enrollment in education or training, often leads to no workforce attachment at all. Wisconsin's past experience with work programs has demonstrated that education and training activities are most meaningful when they are combined with work. In fact, those in work programs who participated *solely* in education or training activities rarely completed them, while activities such as on-the-job training were completed with much greater consistency. This finding is not unique to Wisconsin. A December 1997 statement by the National Center for Policy Analysis concluded that states showing little success in welfare reform have failed to emphasize going to work immediately.

Many people in our communities are already combining education with work. For instance, for Fiscal Year 1996-1997, 12 percent of students in degree programs in the Wisconsin Technical College System were enrolled full-time. This demonstrates the reality that many people experience--the need to work while attending school part-time. It is a mistake to assume that being engaged in continuing education means full-time enrollment or nothing at all.

The aggregation of education and training hours, which allows for more intensive, short-term education or training, is one of the most beneficial current provisions.

There are currently many opportunities for participants on each rung of the W-2 employment ladder to engage in education and training. There is dedicated time for education and training activities for those in W-2 Transitions (up to 12 hours) and Community Service Jobs (up to 10 hours). One of the most beneficial education and training provisions under W-2, and perhaps the least understood, is the current policy that allows the aggregation of these 10 or 12 hours *up front*. This allows participants to be involved in education or training that requires more intensive involvement, such as customized short-term skills training. The potential to aggregate hours is a valuable tool. Equally

as valuable is the wide availability of child care subsidies. Subsidies are available to those in W-2 employment positions, during hours of work and during assigned educational or training activities. Perhaps not as well known is that subsidies are also available to those outside of W-2 who earn less than 165 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), currently $21,995 for a family of three. These subsidies are for hours of work, but may also be used for hours spent engaged in education or training for those in the workforce at least nine months (full-time or part-time). Child care subsidies for time spent in education or training for those not participating in W-2 are limited to two years lifetime.

With a clearer understanding of current education and training possibilities under W-2, it is possible to see how these opportunities become realities for participants. It takes a tremendous amount of coordination. Employer-based partnerships--initiated by the W-2 agencies--that include education and training providers and community based organizations are necessary to deliver well planned opportunities.

The Tecumseh Products Company model offers an excellent example of forging productive partnerships.

The Tecumseh Products Company example in Section Two offers an excellent model for forging this type of partnership. Trainees at Tecumseh, located in Grafton, Wisconsin, recently completed a highly successful four week training program. Training included study in communication skills and work ethic, blueprint reading, machine operation and inspection, shop math, and tool recognition. All 14 who began the training completed it, with 13 placed immediately at $8.95 per hour. It was anticipated that the 14th would be placed soon. This is just one of many examples in which short-term, skill specific training has directly resulted in employment well above minimum wage.

Over the course of five meetings, Committee members spent a considerable amount of time working in small groups to discuss key issues associated with education and training in W-2. Members also heard from a variety of presenters on related topics of particular interest, which helped to form the basis for a series of recommendations.

Recommendations

The Governor's W-2 Education and Training Committee, after an in-depth comparison of what's available to what is needed, offered the following recommendations to enhance education and training opportunities under W-2.

Promote and emphasize education and training opportunities under Wisconsin Works (W-2), including opportunities that may be enhanced as a result of this report.

- Conduct a seminar for all W-2 agencies, which involves other important partners (e.g., Community Steering Committees, employers), making them aware of the

findings of this report, and of proven models for providing education and training. Where possible, seminars should involve members of the Governor's W-2 Education and Training Committee.

- Expand W-2 case management training to emphasize appropriate education and training activities for participants, focusing on basic education and soft skills training and introducing strategies to promote continuing education and training.

- Enhance the education and training section of the W-2 Case Management Resource Guide, emphasizing the importance of education, training and lifelong learning for all low-income workers who are W-2 eligible.

- Increase awareness of opportunities to not only create customized training in conjunction with the technical colleges, but also to take advantage of existing occupational courses (e.g., Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training, welding, etc.).

Emphasize the importance of earning a high school diploma or the equivalent for those who have not done so.

- Encourage W-2 agencies, in promoting case management follow-up services for those progressing from subsidized W-2 employment positions (up to 6 months), to:

  - ➛ cover any direct costs of GED/HSED classes and testing;
  - ➛ document an Employability Plan which emphasizes GED/HSED completion; and
  - ➛ assist in securing a child care subsidy for the time the individual attends classes.

- Raise awareness that, when necessary, formal client assessment may be done to determine current educational level and needs, helping to identify those not within reach of earning a high school equivalency.

- Involve local literacy councils in the provision of literacy and English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) tutoring, including a presence at the Job Center or W-2 agency, or a method for making direct referrals.

- Require W-2 agencies to prepare an Employability Plan for those who are in Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) or case management only, and who do not possess a high school diploma or the equivalent. [1]

- Direct W-2 agencies to prepare and implement a strategy to raise awareness of education and training opportunities available to all low-income working people who

are W-2 eligible, including the availability of child care subsidies for time spent in education and training .

- Submit a legislative language change to the 1999-2000 legislature that will eliminate the 9 month waiting period for child care subsidies for those in unsubsidized employment wishing to become involved in, or stay involved in, GED/HSED classes, basic education or English-as-a-Second Language tutoring.[2]

- Require W-2 agencies to document a specific education/career plan as part of the larger Employability Plan for those in W-2 employment positions.[3]

Emphasize the need for W-2 agencies to forge broad-based partnerships with employers, education and training providers and all available funding sources to establish quality short-term, skill specific training opportunities.

- Build on the initial success many employers and participants have enjoyed as a result of broad-based training partnerships, challenging more employers to initiate or enter into these partnerships (Please see the Tecumseh example in Section Two for an example of this type of partnership).

- Encourage the technical colleges, in working with employers and W-2 agencies, to increase system-wide sharing of curricula for customized, short-term training for skills such as welding, machine operation, Certified Nursing Assistant, and basic manufacturing that meet specific employer needs.

- Encourage W-2 agencies and Job Centers to seek opportunities that will increase the availability and flexibility of quality child care sites with respect to location and hours, and will create transportation options for participants at work or in training.

- Encourage W-2 agencies and partners to increase education and training opportunities at the worksite, increasing availability at times convenient to the employer and employee.

- Encourage W-2 agencies and Job Centers to place a renewed emphasis on single point of contact services for employers, including thorough follow-up.

- Increase utilization of Business & Industry Services, available at every Wisconsin technical college, in assessing occupational skill requirements when packaging and delivering customized training services.

Strengthen support for continuing education and lifelong learning.

- Submit a legislative language change to the 1999-2000 legislature that will modify the matching requirement for the Employment Skills Advancement Program (ESAP), making the participant responsible for securing a *single* match from any available source.

- Encourage W-2 Agencies to track participants moving to unsubsidized employment by documenting employment and educational progress in the Client Assistance for Re-employment and Economic Support (CARES) system at 3, 6 and 12 month intervals, at a minimum.

- Direct W-2 agencies to foster effective partnerships with the technical colleges, UW-Extension, volunteer literacy providers and other education and training providers who deliver adult basic education, literacy and English-as-a-Second Language tutoring, post-employment skills training, and continuing education opportunities.

- Support and encourage employers in either implementing on-site, or creating a linkage to off-site, continuing education programs.

- Encourage local W-2 agencies and their partners to innovate in expanding the availability and flexibility of child care and education and training opportunities at the Job Centers and in community centers or other neighborhood locations.[3]

- Direct W-2 agencies to establish a plan, in coordination with their Community Steering Committees, to identify ongoing funding sources for the Employment Skills Advancement Program (ESAP) matching grant.[3]

- Submit a legislative language change to the 1999-2000 legislature that will reduce the waiting period from 9 months to 6 months for child care subsidies and the Employment Skills Advancement Program (ESAP) for those in unsubsidized employment who wish to participate in education and training programs.[2]

- Create a one-stop shop for information and referrals on continuing education opportunities and financial aid, to be made available in Job Center resource rooms.

- Direct the Department of Workforce Development to develop a model in partnership with the technical colleges, UW-Extension, Job Centers and employers, that increases upward mobility of the low-income workforce.

Foster development of strategies that address the importance of retention.

- Encourage a collaboration of technical colleges, other education and training providers, and W-2 agencies to explore, with employers, the development of a statewide initiative that defines a set of soft skills needed to succeed in the workplace, and introduces an evaluation instrument to measure growth and the value--to employers and workers--of teaching those skills.

- Assist W-2 agencies in supporting proven employer strategies, such as mentoring and Employee Assistance Programs, that support employees new to the workplace and reduce turnover.

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[1] Requires an Administrative Rule change.
[2] Requires a statutory language change.
[3] Requires a policy directive.

Introduction

In late February, the Governor's W-2 Education and Training Committee was appointed to identify the flexibility and kinds of initiatives that can be included in providing entry-level workforce training under Wisconsin Works (W-2). Committee members who participated on this committee had a keen interest, and considerable expertise, in the areas of workforce needs, education and training for workers, and the W-2 program. This Committee met several times over the course of three months, working first to establish key issues to be addressed, and then to provide direction for those charged with meeting the education and training needs of participants.

Six broad topical areas were derived from the charge statement and the particular interests of Committee members.

In approaching its charge, the Committee worked in a logical progression that resulted in the format of this report. Six broad topical areas to be addressed were derived from the charge statement and the particular interests of Committee members. The Committee focused its efforts on six areas which were intended to:

1. *Clarify education and training options available under W-2, and interpret current W-2 education and training policy for practical application. Show how to package what's available and make it more accessible.*

2. *Identify best practices for W-2 agencies, employers, technical colleges, and other Job Center partners.*

3. *Identify what employers need and develop guidelines that agencies should focus on for workforce readiness.*

4. *Identify how W-2 agencies and their partners, including technical colleges, can provide flexible entry level education and training to W-2 participants.*

5. *Address the importance of retention by:*

    - identifying issues which may cause individuals to leave or lose their jobs; and
    - recommending how W-2 agencies and their partners can effectively work to resolve these issues.

6. *Identify what W-2 agencies and their partners can do to facilitate post-employment occupational training and continuing education.*

For each of the six broad categories there were additional points for consideration, detailed in Section Three. Meetings consisted of several sessions in which members worked in small groups to address these six areas, reconvening to provide input in the larger group. Presentations on various topics of interest were requested by Committee members, and were woven into the most appropriate topical area. Information from these presentations has been incorporated into the body of this report, which consists of four primary sections.

Training in skill areas with little or no demand does not serve anyone well.

Section One offers a demographic context within which to discuss the broader issues. It is only with a basic understanding of the population that W-2 is intended to serve that we can begin to address the needs of participants. Educational goals should be based on the needs and abilities of participants. Training goals must be based in part on the goals and needs of participants, but also on the needs of employers. Training in skill areas with little or no demand does not serve anyone well. Employers must be the focal point of partnerships designed to deliver short-term customized training.

Section Two addresses the first of the six broad topical areas, provides clarification of the education and training opportunities currently available under W-2. The W-2 philosophy is that combining work with education and training makes both more meaningful for people. Current policy allows a wide variety of opportunities for education and training. Included with this section is a profile of the Tecumseh Products Company training partnership. Tecumseh hosted the second meeting of the Committee, leading a tour and providing valuable information related to serving employer needs through customizing short-term training programs.

Section Three details the input provided by Committee members concerning the final five broad topical areas. It also incorporates valuable information provided in presentations to the Committee.

Section Four, Recommendations and Action Plan, details suggestions to enhance current provisions. The flexibility of current policy, coupled with these enhancements, will clearly demonstrate Wisconsin's continued commitment to helping people enter the workforce and move to self sufficiency. This section also includes an initial action plan to implement the recommendations of the Committee.

Section One

W-2 Participant Demographics

In order to provide a context for future discussion, this section will offer some demographic information on current W-2 participants. This information is a "snapshot" of caseload demographics. The following numbers are based on January 1998 data, the most recent available when the Committee took up this topic.

In terms of sheer numbers, there has been a gradual increase in the percentage of cases in Milwaukee as compared to the balance of the state. In January of 1987 Milwaukee made up 39 percent of Wisconsin's caseload. A little over two years ago, in December 1995, Milwaukee accounted for 53 percent of the total caseload. It now accounts for 85 percent. In January 1998, 65.1 percent of W-2 participants were in subsidized placements statewide, and 69.1 percent in Milwaukee.

The percentage of participants with a high school diploma (or equivalent) has dropped from 51 percent in December 1995, to 17 percent today.

In December of 1995, 51 percent of the caseheads receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) who were mandatory for work programs had a high school diploma. Currently, only 17 percent of all W-2 participants have a high school diploma or an equivalent. There appears to be some correlation between being a high school graduate and being placed in unsubsidized employment--85.8 percent of those in subsidized placements have no high school diploma, while 77.6 percent in unsubsidized jobs do not. Certainly the percentage of participants in both categories is very high. This may indicate that the need for education and training rests with programs aimed at providing diplomas or their equivalency.

It was also noted that, statewide, the average age of the W-2 participant is 29.6 and the average family size is 3.4 persons. As of January 1998, 71.7 percent of female W-2 participants have never married.

Section Two

W-2 Education and Training Provisions

With a basic knowledge of the demographic background of the population being served, the Committee then discussed the philosophy, goals and provisions for education and training in W-2. While provisions for education and training were included and funded in the W-2 design, the initial months of implementation have placed an emphasis on conversion of participants to W-2 from AFDC and on workforce attachment for those most ready to work. The opportunity now exists to renew the emphasis on the role of education and training as part of the larger push for self-sufficiency.

This section will provide a brief discussion of the W-2 philosophy on education and training--where and how it fits within the program. It will also give an overview of exactly what provisions are made in the W-2 program for the education and training of participants. Finally, several practical examples will be offered to demonstrate how these provisions may be put to valuable use.

Philosophy

Wisconsin Works (W-2) is based on the principle that for those who can work, only work should pay. However, W-2 also recognizes the importance of education and training in the long-term success of participants, and in creating a stable, productive workforce.

People should have the opportunity not only to enter the workforce, but to get a basic education that ensures a chance at sustained employment and advancement.

Given the high percentage of W-2 participants who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent, the program must ensure that people have the opportunity to not only *enter the workforce*, but also to get a basic education that will ensure a chance at *sustained employment* and *advancement*.

W-2 is unique in that it emphasizes a two-pronged approach--work combined with education. Education alone is not the answer. People need the experience that only having a job can provide. Experience with the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program in Wisconsin demonstrated this. Of all the components that participants were involved in, the components least often completed were those that consisted *solely* of GED preparation activities or postsecondary education (PSE). These same, largely unsuccessful programs also took the longest amount of time. That

is why involvement in educational activities alone, including postsecondary education, is not an acceptable approach under W-2. This is not a new policy with W-2. Under the JOBS program, postsecondary education was an approved activity only if the participant was enrolled full-time December 1, 1995, participating satisfactorily at that time, and deemed "not job ready". Contrary to what has often been reported, it is not the case that participants were told on September 1, 1997, when W-2 was implemented statewide, that they could no longer go to school.

Combining work with education and training is the approach that will most likely yield the type of long-term results that we're looking for.

Allowing that education alone is not the answer, it also may be said that workforce attachment alone is not the answer either. If current participants don't work toward the basic skills necessary for retention and advancement, their chances for long-term workforce attachment may not be as good. Combining work with education and training is the approach that will most likely yield the type of long-term results that we're looking for. Again looking to past experience with the JOBS program, the most successful components were job skills training and on-the-job training (OJT).

Provisions

Prior to discussing how education and training is provided under W-2, it will be useful to review some of the essentials of how W-2 services are delivered. It's valuable to have a basic understanding of the interactions between the Job Center, the W-2 agency (where it is separate from the Job Center), and the W-2 applicant/participant. What follows is a brief description of some of the key W-2 elements as they relate to education and training services.

Key Personnel

Resource Specialist

One of the primary responsibilities of the Resource Specialist (RS) is to make referrals to service providers. In the case of education and training, this requires familiarity with what is available at the Job Center, local technical colleges (for short-term skill specific training, GED/HSED/ABE courses, ESL, etc.), local literacy providers (such as area literacy councils, Even Start Programs, etc.), and others in the community who serve the education and training needs of participants. If an individual simply needs to know where to locate needed services in the community, they may want to call or visit with an RS at the Job Center in their area.

Financial and Employment Planner

The Financial and Employment Planner (FEP) is *central* to W-2 integrated case management and signifies the merger of the former economic support and Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) case manager functions. The FEP provides case management, eligibility determination, W-2 placement determinations, Employability Plan (EP) development, and all other services for a participant in a W-2 employment position.

Supportive Services Planner

If an individual is not participating in, not eligible for, or not interested in a W-2 employment position, the Supportive Services Planner (SSP) can determine eligibility and provide for the delivery of services which may include Medical Assistance, Child Care, Food Stamps, or Emergency Assistance, among others.

The SSP is an important resource for those in unsubsidized jobs.

Key Facets

Employability Plans

An employability plan (EP) is a written agreement developed jointly by the FEP and the participant. It is a case management tool which details a logical, sequential series of actions that will assist the participant in achieving employment-related goals. The employability plan is important in any discussion of education and training because all activities related to education and training generally must be incorporated into the plan in order for the participant to access supportive services.

Community Steering Committee

Community Steering Committees (CSCs) are public/private partnerships established by each W-2 agency to provide ties to the local communities with strong leadership from the business sector.

The CSC is to help the W-2 agency identify unsubsidized and subsidized employment opportunities, as well as create Trial Jobs, Community Service Jobs, and W-2 Transition positions. Particularly important in terms of education and training provisions is the responsibility of the CSC to identify training programs, ensuring that training and education programs are relevant to the community's business needs, and, when necessary, improving the availability of child care and access to transportation.

Education, Training and the Employment Ladder

This discussion will first outline all of the education and training activities that may be assigned by the FEP, or that the participant may choose to engage in voluntarily, and will then detail the provisions for education and training activities available to participants on each of the four rungs of the "employment ladder".

Education and Training Options

Issues of particular interest to members of the Governor's Wisconsin Works (W-2) Education and Training Committee were: adult basic education, soft skills training, retention, career advancement, short-term job skills training, and self-esteem building. These are all opportunities addressed as options under current W-2 education and training policy. They are selected jointly by the FEP and the participant as the Employability Plan is developed. What follows are some examples of the wide variety of education and training opportunities currently available.

1. **Skills Training** - Short-term, career focused job skill training. W-2 agencies can coordinate with the Wisconsin Technical College System and other educational resources to implement certified training programs, and also work directly with employers to develop on-site training opportunities. Examples may include:

    - basic welding
    - keyboard/data entry
    - Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs)
    - utility installation
    - office software
    - food preparation
    - electronic assembly
    - child care
    - press production
    - hospitality training
    - entrepreneurial/small business training

2. **Job Search Activities** - Activities that enhance the applicant's/participant's ability to find unsubsidized employment, assisting and preparing individuals for successful job search. Examples may include

    - ***Job Readiness/Motivational Activities***
        - communication styles/personality types
        - communication skills/image
        - career decision making skills
        - career exploration and vocational area identification
        - etc.

- ***Employment Counseling***
  - guidance in career decision making skills
  - ability to relate to others
  - etc.

- ***Job Seeking Skills Training***
  - resume creation, preparation, development and updating
  - job application completion
  - networking skills
  - etc.

- ***Individual Job Search*** (One-on-one, structured job search)

- ***Group Job Search*** (e.g., Job Clubs)

- ***Job Survival/Retention***
  - rules and expectations of employers
  - qualities that employers desire in an employee
  - punctuality
  - attendance
  - following directions
  - teamwork
  - getting along with others
  - planning for emergencies
  - time management
  - reasons that individuals lose jobs
  - dependability
  - mentoring/job coaching opportunities

- ***Job Development*** (marketing participants to employers)

- ***Life Skills Training***
  - understanding and accepting parental responsibilities
  - strengthening parenting skills/understanding relationships
  - family budgets
  - anger management/interpersonal skills
  - problem solving/decision-making skills
  - time management
  - selecting quality child care, and having a backup plan
  - etc.

3. **Job Skill Development** - Job Centers can provide services including job testing and employee screenings, mentoring, career exploration/choices, and job coaching. W-2 agencies may coordinate with the Wisconsin Technical College System, the University of Wisconsin-Extension Program or other educational programs (e.g.,

area literacy councils, Even Start Family Literacy programs) to provide a variety of Adult Basic Education opportunities. Examples of Jobs Skills Development may include:

- writing skills
- math skills
- improving literacy
- remedial education
- HSED/GED preparation classes
- driver's education
- English-as-a-Second Language (ESL);
- etc.

4. **Motivational Training** - One of the biggest hurdles W-2 participants must overcome in order to be successful is a poor self-image. These courses are designed to prepare the participant for expectations of the workplace and to help them feel ready by identifying their strengths and helping them experience some successes (and creating an environment in which some short-term goals can be immediately reached). Examples may include:

   - assessment and work activities related to identifying strengths for employment
   - identifying long-term and short-term life and employment goals
   - mentoring, encouragement and support

5. **Life Skills Training** - Training in the tools that provide the basic foundation necessary in the home to enable the parent(s) to participate more fully in the workforce, in lifelong educational opportunities and in community activities. Practical life skills increase self-esteem and facilitate the pursuit of sustained employment and advancement. Examples may include:

   - parenting skills
   - family budgeting
   - family nutrition/household management
   - etc.

The Committee found that the educational and training options available under W-2 addressed many of their major areas of concern: retention, advancement, soft skills, adult basic education. It becomes a matter of ensuring that these types of education and training are available in all geographic areas, and in a flexible and accessible manner. With a focus on the full engagement of participants, this will increasingly be the case.

Incorporating Education and Training Options

With a basic knowledge of what is available, it is possible to see how these activities are incorporated in the four rungs of the employment ladder.

1. *Unsubsidized employment*

The Job Centers provide services to *all* job seekers. The fact that an individual is in an unsubsidized job should not necessarily result in an end to contact with the Job Center or the FEP, or prevent them from participating in education and training activities. While those in W-2 employment positions generally receive the most focused attention, those in unsubsidized employment must be encouraged--from first contact and then on a continuous basis--to engage in continuing education and lifelong learning, particularly if they do not possess a basic set of skills that includes a high school diploma or equivalent. There may be some who are not interested in, or capable of, doing this. However, all are capable of improving their skills on some level. One of the best ways to ensure this is to participate in case management services to the extent possible, and to remain connected to the valuable services of the Job Center and its partners.

Case Management

Eligible individuals in unsubsidized employment may receive W-2 case management services, which include job search assistance, in addition to receiving W-2 child care and other supportive services, in order to continually improve their employment level. The FEP should work with these individuals to assist them in job retention and to identify services that provide additional skills which will enable them to secure:

- a higher paying job
- a promotion
- a job with more hours
- a career track position
- employment with benefits

The FEP should assist the individual in accessing services available through the Job Center and refer them to programs within the community which will help them continue to improve their employment situation. Activities for these individuals should be available at times and in places that make participation realistic and beneficial, and do not conflict with their existing work schedule.

In order to prevent recidivism and ensure stability, the FEP currently provides follow-up case management services for at least 60 days to participants who progress from a W-2 employment position. The participant may continue as necessary, and the W-2 agencies are encouraged to continue with follow-up case management services for six months. During this period, the FEP should continue to stress the importance of continuing education and lifelong learning. Financial aid for those interested in

pursuing postsecondary education generally focuses on full-time students, but opportunities do exist for those attending part-time also.

Financial Aid to Attend Technical College and Other Postsecondary Institutions

There are numerous grant and loan programs outside the W-2 program available for low-income people attending institutions of higher education. Federal programs include Pell Grants and Supplementary Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG), a work-study program, and three loan program (Perkins, Subsidized and Unsubsidized Stafford, and Parent Loan for Undergraduate Education). State programs for technical schools include the Wisconsin Higher Education Aids Grant, the Talent Incentive Program, Minority Retention Program, and the Wisconsin Indian Grant. In addition, local PICs can finance education under the JTPA or DVR programs. Some tech schools have local institutional funds as well.

A prospective student fills out one application for all types of aid. A budget for the person is calculated, which includes the average cost of tuition, books, living expenses, transportation, child care, and other miscellaneous personal expenses minus the "effective family contribution," which is a formula-derived amount the student is deemed capable of paying. A student's "need" is the calculated budget minus the effective family contribution. The amount of a student's Pell grant is calculated and guaranteed available through a federally designed formula. Other aid is at the discretion of the school's financial aid office and is limited to the amount of money allocated to each school. In determining the "effective family contribution," a student is considered to be dependent unless (s)he meets one or more of several criteria, including being married, having a legal dependent, being a veteran, or being over a certain age.

As a rule, a person must be enrolled at least half-time in order to receive aid. "Half time" is defined as taking six credits. Most classes are for three credits and generally meet three days a week for an hour. Tuition for vocational and associate degrees is $57 per credit. Pell grants are available for people taking fewer than six credits, however.

The charts below show the amount of aid a person would receive with various levels of income, family size, and course load. As the chart shows, any person with one or more dependents and an annual income of $7,000, $10,000, or $15,000 would be eligible for the maximum academic year Pell grant, $2,700 for a full-time student and proportionately less for a student with a less than full-time course load for the 1997-98 school year. Aid for those with family size of one is included to show scenarios that qualify for less than the maximum amount.

FAMILY SIZE	ANNUAL INCOME	*	PELL GRANT	ANNUAL INCOME	*	PELL GRANT	ANNUAL INCOME	*	PELL GRANT
1	$7,000	FT 3/4 1/2 <1/2	$1650 1238 825 413	$10,000	FT 3/4 1/2 <1/2	$550 413 400 0	$15,000	FT 3/4 1/2 <1/2	$0 0 0 0

FAMILY SIZE	ANNUAL INCOME	*	PELL GRANT	ANNUAL INCOME	*	PELL GRANT	ANNUAL INCOME	*	PELL GRANT
2	$7,000	FT 3/4 1/2 <1/2	$2700 2025 1350 675	$10,000	FT 3/4 1/2 <1/2	$2700 2025 1350 675	$15,000	FT 3/4 1/2 <1/2	$2700 2025 1350 675

FAMILY SIZE	ANNUAL INCOME	*	PELL GRANT	ANNUAL INCOME	*	PELL GRANT	ANNUAL INCOME	*	PELL GRANT
3	$7,000	FT 3/4 1/2 <1/2	$2700 2025 1350 675	$10,000	FT 3/4 1/2 <1/2	$2700 2025 1350 675	$15,000	FT 3/4 1/2 <1/2	$2700 2025 1350 675

The technical college system serves primarily part-time students. In the school year 1996-97, 11.7% of students in post-secondary education programs were enrolled full-time. In 1995-96, there were 19,895 technical college students who were also on AFDC. There are no comparable data for later years. However, two indicators that may be proxies for AFDC enrollment are "economically disadvantaged" students and single parents. Between the years 1995-96 and 1996-97, the number of economically disadvantaged students declined 11.2% (from 41,700 to 37,000) and the number of single parents dropped 9.6% (23,100 to 20,900). Data are not available for the current school year.

There are no data on the number of AFDC enrollees who completed a degree program, either from the Wisconsin Technical College System or CARES data system. In addition, DES data analysts caution that any attempt to extract numbers on graduation rates would be misleading because data is incomplete. Over a two-year period, 15% of economically disadvantaged students enrolled in a post-secondary program completed the program compared to 11.5% of students overall.

2. *Trial Jobs*

Trial Jobs are subsidized placements (the employer may receive up to $300 per month for each employee) that are generally 40 hours per week, and are expected to result in permanent, unsubsidized positions.

A participant may work less than that if agreed to by the FEP and the employer. The subsidy would then be prorated based on the number of assigned hours. So, for instance, a participant may request to work only 30 hours per week because she is

attending night school (e.g., postsecondary education, English-as-a-Second Language, GED/HSED, etc.).

The Trial Job employer provides a structured work environment that includes close supervision, mentoring and coaching of Trial Job employees. The employer must incorporate education and training needed for the participant to move into unsubsidized employment, and is expected to:

- provide the same education and training opportunities as provided to unsubsidized employees in similar circumstances, at a minimum; and
- consider other education and training opportunities that the FEP believes will help the participant succeed on the job.

As with unsubsidized employment, the participant may access services provided by the Job Center such as case management, transportation assistance, and child care depending upon eligibility.

3. ***Community Service Jobs***

Persons who are not ready for unsubsidized employment or a Trial Job may be placed in a Community Service Job (CSJ). Education and training is a key component of a CSJ placement. CSJs are intended to provide participants with an opportunity to practice work habits and skills that are necessary to succeed in any regular job environment. These habits and skills are often referred to by employers and others as "soft skills", and may include such things as punctuality, reliability, work social skills, among others.

Participants are generally expected to participate 40 hours per week. The FEP can require up to 30 hours per week of work experience training activities and up to 10 hours per week of education and training activities. Education and training hours may be aggregated to allow participants access to FEP approved education and training activities which require more than 10 hours per week. Aggregation of hours will be discussed in more detail in a later section.

Marginally Employed

Those who are applying for, or participating in, W-2 and are working only a few hours per week in an unsubsidized job may also be placed in a Community Service Job (CSJ) or W-2 T position. However, this may *only* be done if the participant has limitations which prevent an increase in the number of hours in her or his current job, or if those limitations prevent the participant from obtaining another unsubsidized job. Placement in the CSJ must be specifically designed to assist the application/participant in

overcoming these limitations and becoming self-sufficient within a reasonable period of time.

A new initiative is pending that would allow a "partial" CSJ payment, rather than a full payment, dependent upon the hours that somebody participates in CSJ activities (not the number of hours that they are working in unsubsidized employment). This "Prorated CSJ" would replace the marginally employed provision for CSJ participants.

Work experience training activities that may be counted toward the 30 hours may include:

- actual work experience training hours in the CSJ; and
- other work experience training activities assigned as part of the 30 hours that may assist an individual in obtaining a Trial Job or unsubsidized employment, such as on-going job search activities or FEP approved vocational rehabilitation "employment related" activities; and
- meetings with child support agency staff, social workers, health care professionals or other FEP approved meetings necessary to prepare a participant for employment.

CSJ education and training activities approved by the FEP are those that will aid the transition to a Trial Job or unsubsidized employment. Examples of some of the most important ***activities countable toward the 10 hours of activity per week include***:

- a course of study that will meet standards for the granting of a declaration of equivalency of high school graduation (GED or HSED);
- short-term technical college courses or other educational courses that provide a specific employment skill;
- English-as-a-Second Language (ESL);
- parenting, life skills, job skills or other adult basic education (ABE), most of which are available right at the Job Centers.

It is also important to note that in order to allow an 18 or 19 year old CSJ participant to obtain a high school diploma or equivalent, the W-2 agency must permit the participant to attend high school, or to enroll in a course of study that meets established standards, to satisfy, in whole or in part, the required hours of participation in a CSJ. This was a change in statutory language included in the biennial budget changes.

4. *Wisconsin Works Transition (W2-T)*

Applicants who are determined not to be job ready, and who are unable to successfully participate in one of the other W-2 employment positions or unsubsidized employment

due to incapacitation or the need to remain in the home to care for another family member who is severely incapacitated or disabled, will be placed in the Wisconsin Works Transition (W-2 T) employment position.

The W-2 T participant may be engaged in up to 12 hours of education and training activities, rather than the 10 hours of a CSJ. Since W-2 T participants often experience greater challenges to employment than an individual in a CSJ, the education and training activities for the participant may be customized depending upon individual family circumstances. All of the same supportive services available to those in a CSJ, including the option of aggregating hours, are available to W-2 T participants.

Aggregation

One of the most beneficial education and training provisions under W-2, and often the least understood, is the ability of the FEP to aggregate education and training hours. This allows a participant to engage in short-term (generally 12 weeks or less) training programs which may require more than 10 (for a CSJ) or 12 (for a W-2 T) hours per week. The provision allows the FEP to place a CSJ or W-2 T participant in a short-term intensive training program that leads to employment within the first few months of being assigned to the employment position. During this extended education and training period, education and training hours must be mixed with at least some work training activity each week.

It should be noted that this provision may be used only for those in a CSJ or W-2 T, and does not serve those in Trial Jobs or in unsubsidized employment. Many W-2 agencies have few participants in a CSJ or W-2 T, making other strategies necessary in order to engage those who are working full time in education and training activities.

A few examples of aggregating education and training hours will help to clarify the use of this important provision in W-2 education and training policy.

AGGREGATION EXAMPLE #1: A six-month CSJ placement includes 258 hours of education and training.

6 months X 10 hours per week X 4.3 weeks per month
258 hours

If Alicia were to participate in a welding course for 24 hours per week, along with 16 hours of work experience training activities, she could attend training for 11 weeks (258 hours/24 hours per week = 11 weeks).

Some CSJ participants may be receiving skill-specific training from the CSJ provider as part of the 30 hours of work training experience required. Many of these participants, though they are receiving valuable job-specific skills training, might need to begin or continue work in a program leading to a high school diploma (or aimed at increasing English proficiency, etc.). Consider the following example:

AGGREGATION EXAMPLE #2: As demonstrated above, a six-month CSJ placement includes 258 hours of education and training.

Regina is receiving 15 hours per week of training from the CSJ provider in basic office skills. These hours would count as part of the 30 hour work requirement, leaving the entire 258 hours of education and training for the six-month placement. The FEP assigns, an intensive 12 hour per week, 11 week program to receive her high school equivalency diploma (12 hours per week X 11 weeks = 132 hours). In addition, Regina is taking life skills class for 4 hours per week. This easily fits within the allowable hours.

Some participants may have similar goals, but do not receive training that would count toward the 30 hour requirement. Another option available to achieve a similar goal follows:

AGGREGATION EXAMPLE #3: As demonstrated above, a six-month CSJ placement includes 258 hours of education and training.

Dawn wishes to enroll in a 10 week basic manufacturing course, but would also like to participate in a GED course (or HSED classes, or English-as-a-Second Language, etc.).

Dawn may attend the basic manufacturing course for 15 hours per week (15 hours per week X 10 weeks = 150 hours), leaving 108 hours (258 hours total - 150 hours for basic manufacturing course) to devote to the GED course over the six-month CSJ. These hours could be divided out however it works best for her, keeping in mind that some work activity that simulates an actual half or whole day must be mixed in each week.

There are several keys to keep in mind when aggregating education and training hours:

- training program(s) may not exceed 258 hours per six-month placement;
- at least some work activity should be included; and
- if education and training is provided by the CSJ provider (see example #2 above), it counts under the 30 hours of work experience training.

Practical Applications

The examples of aggregation offered above provide some possible applications of that specific policy and, in doing so, education and training policy in general. Offering several more practical applications, or case studies, will help to further clarify additional options available under current W-2 education and training policy.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION #1:
Education & Training Scenario for a *Community Service Job Participant*

Kathy Brown, a 29 year old mother of two preschoolers, has very poor reading and writing skills and only a 9th grade education. For the past year she has worked part-time as a maid for a large hotel. Her hours fluctuate from 15 to 25 hours per week, and it is difficult for her to budget for her household expenses. Kathy applied for W-2 and met with a Financial and Employment Planner (FEP) for an assessment. Her FEP determined that although Kathy was working part-time, she did have a barrier to obtaining full-time employment and placed her in a Community Service Job employment position. Kathy's FEP also helped her secure a child care subsidy, where Kathy's co-payment would be $34/week for licensed care, $24 for certified.

Kathy was assigned 5 hours of work activity in a volunteer food bank in addition to 5 hours of weekly job search activities (her work hours at the hotel also count toward her 30 hour weekly requirement due to the marginally employed provision under W-2). Kathy is also assigned to 10 hours of Adult Basic Education (ABE) instruction per week to improve her reading and writing skills and complete her GED.

Income Scenario: Medical Assistance
$516/month earned income ($6/hr X 20 hrs avg X 4.3 wks/mo)
$673/month CSJ payment
$150/month child support
$36/month Food Stamps
$1,375 per month

PRACTICAL APPLICATION #2:
Education & Training Scenario for a *Community Service Job Participant*

Donna Anderson, a 19 year old high school graduate with a 1 year old child, has never held a job. Donna applies for W-2 and meets with her FEP, who determines that Donna is appropriate for placement in a CSJ. Donna's FEP assists her in arranging for licensed child care--for which she has a $5/week co-payment obligation--and assigns her to 20 hours per week of activity in a nursing home. In addition, Donna is assigned to 20 hours per week in a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program. Her education and training hours were aggregated to allow for participation in the intensive 4 week

CNA course. Donna has been assured by the nursing home that, due to her strong work efforts, she will be hired full-time when she completes the CNA program. She will then still be eligible for a child care subsidy if she meets eligibility criteria.

Note: Because of her age, if Donna did not have her high school diploma the W-2 agency must permit her to attend high school, or to enroll in a course of study that meets established standards, to satisfy, in whole or in part, the required hours of participation in a CSJ.

Income Scenario:
Medical Assistance
[$367.50 in-kind housing subsidy--70% of $525/month]
$673/month CSJ payment
$118/month Food Stamps

$791 per month

PRACTICAL APPLICATION #3:
Education and Training Scenario
for a *Wisconsin Works Transitions (W-2 T) Participant*

Nancy Jones, age 35, is the mother of a 10 year old daughter. She has been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, which has progressed to the degree that she is very weak and lacks coordination. She is no longer able to work at her job as a waitress at the Next Door Cafe. Nancy applied for W-2 and, based on the medical information provided by her physician, her FEP placed Nancy in a W-2 Transitions (W-2 T) employment position and requested a formal assessment with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). The FEP also assisted Nancy with her transportation and needs. Nancy develops an Employability Plan with her FEP and DVR counselor.

Based on the advice of Nancy's physician, the FEP assigns 20 hours per week of rehabilitation activities to maintain her current physical abilities, 2 hours per week of mental health counseling to address Nancy's depression regarding her current situation, and 4 hours per week of motivational activity. With DVR's assistance, Nancy is assigned to a short term computer training course that, with some assistive technology, will provide Nancy new skills that will allow her to obtain full-time employment.

Income Scenario:
Medical Assistance
[$367.50 in-kind housing subsidy--70% of $525/month]
$628/month CSJ payment
$71/month Food Stamps
$699 per month

Practical Application #4:
Education and Training Scenario for a *Trial Job Participant*

Karen is a 25-year-old mother of four. She was recently laid off from a local toy factory which downsized its labor force. Although she has several years experience assembling dolls, there are no similar factory jobs in her area. There are, however, several openings at Ameritech. Karen has a good attitude and likes to work with others but she does not have the technical skills to work the phone systems at Ameritech. In addition, Ameritech only hires individuals with at least a high school diploma. Since Karen has not completed her GED, Ameritech would not usually consider hiring her.

The W-2 agency contracts with Ameritech to develop five Trial Jobs with an in-house GED program for several W-2 participants, including Karen. Karen's FEP assists her with applying for a child care subsidy for her preschool daughter, requiring a co-pay of $32 per week ($137.60/month). During her first three months, while Ameritech is receiving the $300 Trial Job subsidy, Karen is paid a regular wage of $8.50 per hour for a 40 hour work week. Karen's work week includes 8 hours in an in-house GED class. This is in addition to the regular new hire training all employees attend during their first three months. She is paid for those 8 hours just like her other work hours. The local technical college provides the GED instructor who comes on-site four days a week to teach the class.

After the three months is up, Karen is permanently hired by Ameritech. She has almost completed her GED and is interested in pursuing an associate's degree. She continues to work with her FEP in follow-up case management, and the FEP helps Karen research associate's degree programs and helps her apply for grants and loans.

Income Scenario: Medical Assistance
[$525 in-kind housing subsidy--70% of $750/month]
$1462/month earned income
$200/month child support
$123/month Food Stamps
$1785 per month

PRACTICAL APPLICATION #5:
Education and Training Scenario for a *Community Service Job Participant*

May Kao Vang, a 44 year old mother of 6 school age children, has limited English proficiency. May Kao's husband is working full-time in a local bakery at $6.00 per hour. Over the years she has worked on and off in a manufacturing environment, becoming a good worker limited only by her inability to communicate effectively with supervisors. She meets with a FEP who, after determining financial and non-financial eligibility,

determines that a CSJ placement would best suit May Kao's needs and assists in making child care arrangements to cover hours when her husband is not available.

The FEP aggregates education and training hours, assigning May Kao to an intensive 12 week, 20 hour per week English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) course at the community center, emphasizing words commonly used by local manufacturers. May Kao also participates in work experience training at a supply warehouse while Job Center partners conduct a Job Development to secure May Kao a well-paid Trial Job in manufacturing upon completion of the 12 week ESL course. May Kao continues to receive a child care subsidy during the Trial Job, and to attend ESL classes on Saturday mornings.

Income Scenario: Medical Assistance
$1032/month earned income [Husband's Income - $6 x 40 x 4.3]
$673/month CSJ payment
$241/month Food Stamps
$1946 per month

PRACTICAL APPLICATION #6:
Education and Training Scenario for an Individual in *Unsubsidized Employment*

Pam, a mother of 3 (1 preschool age), is earning $7.00 per hour (plus an average of $150/month in commissions) and full benefits in her full-time position with Amerivoice Telecommunications. Pam secured this position by completing a short-term training course while participating in a CSJ. She now wants to focus on completing a course to receive her High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED).

Pam has continued to work with her FEP in case management. Her FEP helped her arrange child care for her youngest son while she works, with a $32/week co-pay required. In addition, since Pam has been employed with Amerivoice for nine months, she is now eligible for a child care subsidy during the time she attends classes at the Job Center to attain her HSED.

Income Scenario: Medical Assistance
$1390/month earned income [Wage + commission]
$164/month Food Stamps
$1554 per month

Training FEPs and Educating Participants

FEPs receive extensive case management training that includes information about engaging participants in education and training activities. In addition, FEPs and other key staff at the W-2 agencies have access to the Case Management Resource Guide (CMRG) which details general options for resources and referrals. The Community Steering Committees (CSCs) and Children's Services Networks (CSNs) are tasked with compiling a local resource and referral list.

It is crucial that everyone involved in education and training opportunities for W-2 participants and other low-income workers be aware of what is possible under W-2, and what is needed by participants. This requires continued worker training (for W-2 agency personnel and Job Center staff) and extensive consumer education (for employers, W-2 participants and low-income workers, technical colleges, volunteer literacy providers, Even Start program coordinators, other education or training providers, and many others). Only be disseminating information using appropriate channels--to those delivering services, and those receiving them--can we begin to engage people in education and training activities at a meaningful level.

Training Partnerships That Work

Tecumseh Products Company is a growing corporation that produces mechanical and electrical components essential to industries creating end-products for health, comfort and convenience. Tecumseh employs 420 people at its Engine and Gear Service Division in Grafton, Wisconsin--320 of which are production and service hourly union employees. When Tecumseh determined a need for quality operators, the company began work with many dedicated partners to structure a successful training program.

Each area in Wisconsin has organizations and agencies that can be valuable partners. In this employer-based training partnership, the following groups played an instrumental role:

- ★ **Tecumseh** *defined its training needs and worked with partners to best meet those needs.*
- ★ **Milwaukee Area Technical College** *developed and implemented the contract with Tecumseh and its local union--International Association of Machinists.*
- ★ **Opportunities Industrialization Center of Greater Milwaukee** *assisted with recruitment and transportation.*
- ★ **Private Industry Council** *provided funding for the training initiative.*
- ★ **Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership (WRTP)** *initiated and facilitated the program.*
- ★ **Milwaukee Jobs Initiative (MJI)** *provided funding; assisted in recruiting participants and monitoring progress.*
- ★ **Ozaukee County** *assisted with transportation.*
- ★ **Central City Workers Center** *assisted with recruiting and transportation.*

PROFILE: TECUMSEH CUSTOMIZED, ENTRY-LEVEL TRAINING PROGRAM

Curriculum:	communication skills and work ethic, blueprint reading, machine operation and inspection, shop math and tool recognition
Duration:	4 weeks
Hours:	7:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday (½ hour lunch)
Began Training:	14 *(7 W-2)*
Completed:	14
Hired:	13 (anticipate hiring final candidate)
Starting Wage:	$8.95/hr (with premiums for 2nd, 3rd shifts), regularly scheduled pay increases, and health coverage after 30 days

This program has succeeded, and should serve as a model, for several reasons:

- strong partnerships have resulted in a mutually beneficial training program;
- training has directly resulted in placement;
- those placed have real opportunities for advancement, and already have in some cases;
- Tecumseh supports lifelong learning by offering other important training opportunities on-site (7 people recently completed work on their GED).

"The key to this whole process is employers and agencies working together, as partners, to successfully create customized, short term training programs."

Dave Eberhardt
Operations Manager, Tecumseh

Section Three
Key Issues

In order to make the best use of Committee member experience and expertise, the majority of the Committee's time together was spent in workgroups. In considering its charge at the initial meeting, the Committee identified six broad topical areas they wanted to address. The group felt that these key issues must be addressed in order to promote or enhance education and training opportunities under W-2.

The six areas on which the Governor's W-2 Education and Training Committee focused its efforts were:

1. Clarifying education and training options available under Wisconsin Works (W-2), including practical applications of current policy.

2. Identifying current best practices for W-2 agencies, employers, technical colleges, and other Job Center partners.

3. Identifying employer needs and developing guidelines that agencies should focus on for workforce readiness.

4. Identifying how W-2 agencies and their partners, including technical colleges, can provide flexible entry level education and training to W-2 participants.

5. Addressing the importance of job retention by:

    - identifying issues which may cause individuals to leave or lose their jobs; and
    - recommending how W-2 agencies and their partners can effectively work to resolve these issues.

6. Identifying what W-2 agencies and their partners can do to facilitate post-employment occupational training and continuing education.

The first of these six areas, a clarification of current policy, was treated in the previous section. Section Two described what is available under current W-2 policy, providing several examples of how these provisions may be applied.

The Committee's response to the second of the six topical areas discusses "best practices", is based on how local agencies and providers are progressing in their efforts to engage participants in education and training activities. The discussion also includes

general information about the various forms that successful education or training engagement may take.

Best Practices

At the second meeting, which took place at Tecumseh Products Company in Grafton, the Committee broke into work groups to discuss best practices. Specifically they were asked to:

Identify best practices for W-2 agencies, employers, technical colleges, and other Job Center partners.

In responding to this question, groups pointed to a variety of ways they have been able to deliver education or training to W-2 participants. The focus was clearly on the following strategies:

Build and Foster Strong Partnerships

The ability to successfully build strong partnerships was a consistent theme throughout the series of meetings. These partnerships are critical if we are to be able to consistently provide the variety of education and training opportunities required by employers and desired by participants. An excellent example of successful partnership building was provided in the Tecumseh example given in the previous section.

Partnerships should be employer-based when possible. This idea grows from the notion that employers are one of two primary customers being served by the Partnership for Full Employment concept employed by the Department of Workforce Development. Creating employer-based partnerships makes sense for two reasons. First, curricula for skills training should be based on employer needs, requiring considerable input from the employer. Second, employer-based partnerships offer the best opportunity to provide work-site education and training opportunities at times that make sense for the employer and the employee. This includes addressing the need to include child care and transportation in the planning process.

Key suggestions to effectively engage employers in this process emerged from group discussion. They included:

- ***Continue to emphasize one-stop, single point of contact service for employers.*** This decreases the burden on the employer and fosters a mutually beneficial relationship.

- ***Hold employer lunches and initiate other employer outreach efforts.*** Employers should be engaged in as many creative ways as possible, although multiple and overlapping contacts, which can be more confusing than beneficial, should be avoided.

- ***Focus on the input of employers on the Community Steering Committee (CSC).*** This is a key area of input for employers. One suggestion was the possible creation of a separate employer committee that would garner even more input in areas where the CSC had minimal employer representation.

The number and variety of organizations that can be included in providing effective, employer-focused education and training opportunities is limited only by what is available locally. The technical colleges and other direct providers, such as family literacy programs (including Even Start) and local literacy councils who offer literacy and English-as-a-Second Language tutoring, are certainly key potential partners, as are libraries.

Be Flexible in the Design and Provision of Education and Training Opportunities

Flexibility is crucial to the long-term success of education and training programs that hope to effectively and efficiently serve a working population.

Providing education and training opportunities in places and at times that are convenient should be of central concern. For basic and continuing education, the availability of offerings at the Job Centers, at the worksite, and in neighborhoods should be plentiful and flexible in terms of time and the ease of movement into and out of classes. This is critical in any attempt to promote lifelong learning and increased competencies in key areas, such as math, reading and English proficiency.

Providing education and training opportunities in places and at times that are convenient should be of central concern.

Skills training should result from employer-based partnerships that address the identified needs of employers. This type of training should not end with placement. Full-time, sophisticated workplace training that allows for skills upgrade should be offered in order to promote advancement and a continued cycle of placement and promotion. There must be recognition that initial placement does not equal self-sufficiency, nor does it necessarily eliminate the need for skills upgrade or continuing education. Worksite distance learning and the ability for customers to register for for-credit technical college classes at the Job Center have been successful approaches in some areas.

Include Critical Support Services Where and When Possible

Committee members acknowledged and discussed the need to address the issues of child care and transportation for W-2 participants and the working poor in an ongoing, innovative fashion. A presentation to the Committee outlining Wisconsin's new Child Care Subsidy Program was a direct result of the desire to address lingering child care questions.

Child Care

Wisconsin's new Child Care Subsidy Program serves all low-income working families, whether or not they have ever participated in AFDC or other public assistance programs. Under W-2, this program ended multiple categorical funds for low-income families and replaced them with a single, coherent child care funding stream. The intent of the new program is to assure child care support to families who have struggled to stay off public assistance and to help families entering the workforce to sustain employment.

Families are income eligible if their gross income is equal to or less than 165% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), currently $21, 995 for a family of 3. Families must also meet the W-2 asset standard. After initial eligibility, families remain eligible until their income exceeds 200% of the FPL ($23,483 for a family of 3).

Non-financial eligibility criteria include:

- the parent is working
- the parent is less than 20 years of age and is enrolled in high school or a high school equivalency program.
- the parent is participating in FEP approved activities (including education and training) in any of the four employment positions: W-2 Transitions, Community Service Jobs (CSJs), Trial Jobs, or Unsubsidized Employment.
- the parent is participating in educational activities (postsecondary education, ESL, Adult Basic Education, GED prep course, etc.) or employment skills training and has been in unsubsidized employment full-time for at least 9 months.
- the parent is participating in Food Stamp Employment and Training work search or work experience programs.
- the parent is a W-2 applicant engaged in up-front job search, training or orientation activities.

There are no time limits for family eligibility, with the exception of the two-year lifetime limit for those in the workforce participating in voluntary education and training. A co-payment is required on a sliding scale based on income and family size, the number of children in subsidized care, and the type of child care provider chosen. In addition, families are required to cooperate with child support determination.

The keys are:

- ★ **For those in W-2 Transitions or Community Service Job employment positions, child care subsidies are available for work and assigned education or training activities.**

- ★ **For other low-income workers who meet financial eligibility criteria, child care subsidies are available for work and, after nine months of workforce attachment, education or training activities**.

The Committee identified several issues and suggestions that should be considered when planning for the child care needs of W-2 participants and working poor who are interested in pursuing education and training opportunities:

- *Provide child care at the Job Center, and at the job or training site.*
- *W-2 agencies can buy child care slots, addressing unexpected need that may lead to the rejection of promising job offers due to lack of immediate child care availability.*
- *Increase efforts to train providers.*
- *Provide scholarships for those interested in provider training.*
- *Implement and use child care cooperatives where feasible.*
- *Create child care availability in industrial parks where need is great and suitable numbers exist.*

Transportation

Transportation problems are, in many cases, tied directly to geographic location. For instance, transportation needs in rural and major metropolitan areas may be more pronounced than those in a small city, while other areas may not have a problem at all.

In the Tecumseh example (see Section Two), the formation of effective partnerships at the outset allowed transportation to be packaged with the training program. If the consideration of transportation is part of the overall planning process, rather than an afterthought, associated problems are more likely to be avoided. The same is true of child care.

The Committee recognized that successful use of techniques to address transportation concerns include well established methods such as the distribution of bus tokens and the use of ride share coordinators. But they also highlighted more innovative

approaches, including car repair programs, the use of "auto counselors", and county run transportation programs (such as that of Ozaukee County in the Tecumseh example). Many of these approaches may be funded through the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), the counties, private foundations, employers, W-2 Job Access Loans (JALs), or conventional loans.

Transportation Assistance

It is the responsibility of the W-2 agency to work with the Community Steering Committee (CSC) and the Children's Services Network (CSN) to ensure expanded transportation options for W-2 applicants and participants. Options will vary according to area and existing transportation availability.

Mix of Funding Sources

Several of the funding sources used to serve W-2 clients have different eligibility criteria that make it difficult to effectively serve an integrated customer base. Many employers and education or training providers refer to the "critical mass" necessary to provide services, including education and training. This means that, in most instances, there must be a certain number of participants before a class may be held.

One way to address this concern is to offer education and training in areas where a "critical mass" is more easily assembled (e.g., Job Centers, neighborhoods, industrial parks--rather than a single or small employer). Another is to mix funding sources and/or customers into larger groups whenever possible. This requires creativity in order to meet funding requirements, but it can certainly be done. At the Racine County Workforce Development Center (WDC), for instance, all participants who complete courses at the WDC receive certificates. Some need them in order to fulfill program requirements, some do not. Providing completion certificates to all accomplishes at least two goals: ensuring that various program requirements are met, and that populations are not separated and stigmatized.

There are a wide variety of funding sources available to meet workforce development needs. The following is a partial list:

- ✓ Carl Perkins vocational education funds
- ✓ Adult Education Act funds (for GED, etc.)
- ✓ Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) funds
- ✓ Wagner-Peyser Act funds
- ✓ public and private foundations
- ✓ employers
- ✓ technical schools
- ✓ Welfare to Work (WtW) grants
- ✓ labor organizations

- ✓ clients
- ✓ Food Stamp Employment & Training (FSET)
- ✓ Department of Commerce (DOCom)
- ✓ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)
- ✓ Head Start funds
- ✓ TEACH funds
- ✓ Wisconsin Housing & Economic Development (WHEDA)
- ✓ Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and other federal sources
- ✓ Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
- ✓ Local Government
- ✓ Grants

It is important that organizations have grant writing capability, or access to a grant writer, in order to compete for grants when and where available.

Universal or Shared Curricula for Short-term Trainings

Moraine Park and Waukesha County Technical Colleges are currently using a standard curriculum and assessment tool, called "Workplace Success Skills", to teach soft skills and measure the impact of the training. This standardized approach clearly identifies a set of core competencies expected by employers, and allows trainers and employers to better gauge the impact of the "soft skills" training that teaches those competencies. Where possible, curricula for job-skills training (welding, machine operation, etc.) should also be shared.

Post-employment Support and Encouragement

Well planned and strongly supported mentoring programs, coupled with effective follow-up case management services--both of which stress the importance of sustained employment, advancement and lifelong learning--are critical to the success of participants and the satisfaction of employers. Lifelong learning and continuing education should be emphasized consistently by all partners, from the first interaction through all that follow. Sacrifices are often required to achieve educational goals, but it is vital to encourage people to set and work toward these goals.

Mentoring programs should not be limited to the workplace, but should take advantage of community volunteer networks in order to provide the type of well-rounded support that those new to the workforce will require. Mentors do not have to be co-workers in order to provide valuable information about community resources and the resolution of problems that, while seemingly simple to some, can quickly become overwhelming.

Employee Assistance Program (EAPs) have also enjoyed great success where they have been employed. Employers who do not currently have mentoring or Employee Assistance programs may benefit from the experience of their colleagues or the Job

Centers, who should be prepared to offer advice in the construction of meaningful support mechanisms.

Be Proactive in Identifying Training Needs

Employers are best able to determine current and future training needs. An additional benefit of making partnerships employer-based is that it allows for the identification of training needs in a timely manner. Employers are best able to determine current and future training needs.

In identifying these training needs it is important to include other key groups, such as high schools, who help to shape the employer's ability to address those needs. Another key is the effective use of state and local Labor Market Information (LMI), which helps to detail growth industries and the training that may be required to participate in them. Nearly every Job Center has a labor market analyst on site to serve employers, job seekers and others with an interest.

Delivering Best Practices Information

Many agencies are being extremely creative in how they address the educational and training needs of W-2 participants and employers. The question quickly becomes one of how to best share these approaches--or "best practices"--with colleagues, Financial and Employment Planners (FEPs), and other involved or interested parties.

Committee members offered many possibilities for sharing information:

- the creative use of technology, including the internet
- resource guides for the technical colleges, including information about:
  - *funding sources*
  - *program guidelines*
  - *contact lists that detail staff and responsibilities*
- Community Steering Committees (CSCs)
- Employment & Training Boards
- Employers
- Human Resources (HR) departments
- Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC)
- Local Chambers of Commerce
- Regional Planning Boards
- Labor Unions
- Media
- Trade magazines (Wisconsin Corporate, etc.)

Employers as Partners

A consistent focus of the Governor's W-2 Education and Training Committee was the need for successful partnerships in order to deliver flexible, effective education and training opportunities. These partnerships, particularly for worksite training, need to be employer-based. In that continuing education at the worksite should also be strongly encouraged, employers must also be deeply involved in partnerships aimed at addressing this need.

Realizing the importance of employer involvement in workforce development initiatives, the Committee undertook a somewhat informal survey of employers across Wisconsin to get an idea of their needs and interests.

Employer Survey

The Committee's employer survey was informal, intended only to get a sense of the needs of employers who have indicated a willingness to hire W-2 participants. The survey was distributed to over 750 employers throughout Wisconsin. It had about a 56 percent return rate (422 surveys returned).

The objective of the survey was to determine several things, including:

- the type of entry-level jobs that will become available over the next 12 months
- the minimum skills required of entry-level workers by employers
- the type of education and training employers would be willing to provide
- the services that employers may be willing to work with a Job Center to provide

Nearly 60 percent of new unskilled hires will be full-time, have health care benefits and receive an average starting wage of $6.54.

Respondents indicated they will seek to hire nearly 21,000 unskilled workers, more than 8,500 skilled workers, and about 1,500 technical workers in the coming year. About 60 percent of these jobs are anticipated to be full-time. Of those who responded, it appears that counties experiencing the greatest amount of hires will be Milwaukee, Dane and Brown. Nearly 60 percent of new unskilled hires will have health care benefits available, over 70 percent for skilled and technical hires. About 60 percent of new unskilled hires are anticipated to be full-time, with significantly higher percentages for skilled and technical hires (over 70 percent in both instances). The average wage for all respondents was $6.54 for unskilled hires, $8.21 for skilled, and $10.31 for technical.

Nearly all respondents are providing some type of training. About 86 percent indicated that they offer on-the-job training for new hires, while approximately 33 percent offer a mentoring program to help acclimate workers to the job site, and 13 percent offer

apprenticeships. With regard to continuing education on-site, 5 percent offer basic math or reading courses, while 3 percent offer GED/HSED courses. This is an area in which many opportunities exist for education providers. The vast majority of respondents (84%) conduct their own training, while about 18 percent indicated that they work with the local technical college, 9 percent use consultants, and 6 percent have other arrangements.

The need for outreach to employers continues to be great, reflected in the fact that nearly 50 percent of respondents indicated they didn't know whether or not they were willing to work with a W-2 agency or other Job Center partner to provide space and assistance for education or training of employees. About 38 percent said that they would be willing, or already are, working with the local W-2 agency or Job Center. A significant number of respondents, 13 percent, indicated that they were not willing to work with the local W-2 agency to provide training.

TABLE 3.1: MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS OF ENTRY LEVEL EMPLOYEES

	Unskilled *(N=346)*		***Skilled*** *(N=303)*		***Technical*** *(N=159)*	
Minimum Qualifications	*Number*	*%*	*Number*	*%*	*Number*	*%*
No Minimum Requirements	9	2.6%	1	0.3%	1	0.6%
Passing Drug Test	176	50.9%	162	53.5%	93	58.5%
Pass Crim. Background Check	159	46.0%	149	49.2%	85	53.5%
Good Basic Life Skills	241	69.7%	211	69.6%	118	74.2%
Good Interpersonal Skills	240	69.4%	253	83.5%	137	86.2%
Good Work Habits	324	93.6%	284	93.7%	149	93.7%
English Proficiency	167	48.3%	178	58.7%	95	59.7%
8th Grade Math Skills	119	34.4%	105	34.7%	54	34.0%
8th Grade Reading Skills	133	38.4%	106	35.0%	54	34.0%
High School Grad/Equivalent	149	43.1%	194	64.0%	97	61.0%
Job-Specific Training	X	X	108	35.6%	47	29.6%
Short-term Certificate Training	X	X	79	26.1%	53	33.3%
Vocational or Technical Degree	X	X	107	35.3%	110	69.2%
Four-year College Degree	X	X	37	12.2%	46	28.9%
Prior Work Experience in Job	X	X	193	63.7%	103	64.8%
Other	44	12.7%	25	8.3%	10	6.3%

Table 3.1 reflects the number of respondents who marked each characteristic as a minimum qualifications for entry-level employment. It is not possible to determine the *combination* of qualifications desired, or how respondents would rank them.

There are a few other qualifications that must be made prior to drawing conclusions from data in this table:

- These data are not weighted. Employers anticipating large number of hires are not distinguished from those anticipating few hires.
- Several respondents, some commenting only that they hire "hundreds of employees", did not put a specific number, and were thus not counted. Wage levels and qualification preferences for these respondents are not reflected.
- Survey responses that indicated minimum qualifications for unskilled, skilled, or technical entry-level employees, but did not include the number of anticipated hires were not tabulated.
- The number who selected vocational or technical degree and four year degree requirements may be inflated somewhat since some respondents checked both, or indicated "either/or".

Role of Employer Partners

During the course of the third meeting, held at the Racine County Workforce Development Center, Committee members broke into subgroups to address a series of questions relating to the role of employers as partners in the provision of education and training. This was the third of the six broad topic areas identified at the initial meeting.

The importance of purposefully including employers as partners in this process cannot be understated. This will need to be a consistent approach if W-2 is to enjoy long-term success in moving participants to sustained employment and supporting opportunities for advancement and lifelong learning.

Committee member responses follow each topic or question.

Workgroup Questions and Responses

Identify what employers need and develop guidelines that agencies should focus on for workforce readiness.

In addressing this broad topic, group members specifically considered the following:

Traits (soft skills) that make a person employable.

- ability to problem solve
- regular attendance
- dependability
- responsibility
- ability to prioritize
- creative thinking
- consideration
- teamwork
- personal hygiene
- decision making ability
- listening skills
- conflict resolution

- customer service
- punctuality
- positive, cooperative attitude
- team player
- effective interpersonal skills (the ability to relate well/appropriately to other employees, supervisors and others
- life skills (whole range)
- personal hygiene/appropriate dress for job
- ability to learn current skills the employer requires, and also the future skills
- ability to produce work of an acceptable quality at an acceptable rate
- ability to take and follow direction
- ability to reason
- common sense

Many Committee members expressed the thought that it is important to agree upon a prescribed set of soft skills on a statewide level, to develop an instrument for measurement/assessment of those skills, to develop an appropriate curriculum around soft skill competencies, and to measure longitudinal progress with the instrument (pre- and post-measurement to determine the effectiveness of the training). Soft skills generally include the ability to:

- → *work productively*
- → *work cooperatively*
- → *communicate clearly*
- → *learn effectively*
- → *act responsibly*
- → *value self positively*
- → *think critically and creatively*

Several Committee members further believed that possessing these soft skills correlates to the ability to sustain employment, which benefits the employee and provides a return on the employer investment by reducing turnover. A method for demonstrating this return on investment to the employer is needed (i.e., investment equals soft skills training). The above model would help to provide it.

There is also a relationship and interdependence between life skills and soft skills, which together allow people to cope effectively with challenges and basic requirements at home and, having done so, in the workplace.

Identify the basic skills employers want *beyond* soft skills (e.g.: H.S. diploma, math, English proficiency).

Committee members offered specific skills that they believe employers need in addition to those traits listed above as "soft skills". These skills or characteristics include:

- positive work history with corresponding positive references
- free of drug or other substance abuse
- honesty (criminal background check)
- basic literacy and numeracy
- High School Diploma or equivalent
- the ability to learn skills specific to the job or industry, for example:
  - ◊ work with hydraulics/pneumatics
  - ◊ read blueprints
  - ◊ use measurement tools
  - ◊ understand terms and tools specific to worksite
- basic computer knowledge
- basic understanding of quality tools
- basic knowledge of safety procedures
- job-specific technical skills
- basic computer skills are now essential:
  - ◊ keyboarding
  - ◊ e-mail
  - ◊ internet

What can be done to support W-2 participant new to the workforce, and to reinforce soft skills in the work environment.

Committee members identified a broad range of options that are proven mechanisms to support those new to the worksite or the workforce. These options should include a method to reinforce soft skills in the workplace. Options identified in small groups were:

- mentoring
- one-on-one communication
- continuing case management services after placement
- recognition of mentors
- clear communication of policies and procedures
- Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)
- in-house education and training opportunities
- availability of emergency transportation lists
- relationships with financial institutions/personal finance training
- positive reinforcement tools (certificates, recognition, etc.)
- transportation and child care solutions
- job coaching
- training -- OJT and tutoring
- on-site child care
- family-friendly work environment
- transportation solutions
  - ◊ vans - ride share
  - ◊ car pools
  - ◊ subsidized bus routes
- visible/regular/attainable pay steps and benefits

- opportunity for promotion in an advancement process that is clear
- one-on-one communication
- Internal workshops/brownbag seminars on soft skills,
- appropriately rewarded/recognized, on topics such as:
  - ◊ hygiene
  - ◊ change
  - ◊ anger management
  - ◊ workplace safety
  - ◊ time management
  - ◊ money management
- continuing case management services after placement

How to keep employers informed of workforce resources that are available, and to package/combine incentives in a way that simplifies the process and allows employers to deal with all job seekers.

Keeping employers involved requires keeping them informed. Committee members were asked to compile a list of way to accomplish this. Their ideas included the following:

- treat the employer as a customer
- single point of contact, one-stop shopping (provision of "turn-key" process) that details incentives, supports, etc.
- consistent and regular message, well-packaged and with a minimum of red tape
- aggressive outreach, education and involvement of employers through employer groups and community steering committees
- chambers of commerce, service clubs, HR groups
- Job Center could host employer luncheons
- Job Center staff should visit, educate, sell to employers by geography & category
- effective use of media
- technology (web pages for Job Center)
  and
- ***Provision of follow-up services, which are key to our employer customers.***

Some Committee members felt that there is a danger in giving employers the impression that worker training and development has to involve public funds. Worker training is a basic responsibility of the employer and the employee first and foremost. Training is a survival issue for employers and employees. It needs to be determined when public money should be involved. Several members felt that public dollars should be used to stimulate pilot programs and efforts to demonstrate effectiveness and develop best practices, but that employers should then continue the programs without subsidy.

Providing Flexible Entry-Level Education and Training

The importance of being able to provide flexible entry-level education and training is woven throughout this report. Committee members addressed the topic specifically at the third meeting in Racine, as the fourth of the six broad topic areas chosen for discussion. During the course of their discussion, subgroups addressed the need to:

Identify how W-2 agencies and their partners, including technical colleges, can provide flexible entry level education and training to W-2 participants.

In addressing this broad topic, group members specifically considered the following:

How can opportunities for job-related, short-term training for participants who are working (as well as those in CSJ/W-2 T employment positions) be increased?

Committee member responses:

- Allow people the ability to access training programs when and where they can, with open entry/open exit courses intended to address this access issue and the different learning styles, paces of individuals.
- Address various disabilities, including learning disabilities, and the special needs of the non-traditional workforce.
- Improve and increase interface between technical colleges and employers in order to have offerings reflect employer needs.
- By moving away from the thought that an Associate Degree (or any degree) is the prerequisite for a job.
- Encourage more creative thought ("thinking out of the box").
- Do not overlook small employers, identifying and meeting their needs also.
- Work toward solutions of the "critical mass" problem, reaching adequate numbers in order to make training program viable for employers of various size and answering the questions:
  - ◊ who aggregates the trainees?
  - ◊ how can we mix participants from different programs, together and with the general public?
- Plan for the future by creating a structure to look ahead six months to two years, identifying current and future needs.
- Create and foster linkages to agencies/programs that have a successful record of short-term training (less than three months).
- Cost-effective use of available training funds, paying attention to the cost of training.
- Establish priority employment needs and encourage/facilitate major employer involvement in education and training.

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- Competency-based assessment used to match employee skills and interests with job requirements.
- Include internships and on-the-job experiences in training.
- Market the success stories.
- Customize the employer-agency relationship.
- Take risks and be flexible.
- Involve employers in curriculum development.
- Create practical on-the-job training programs in a sheltered work setting.
- Customize the time, place and pace of programs according to employer needs.
- Encourage and facilitate employer groups to offer shared training, including availability, at their facilities. The training could cover "universal" job skills, or could be job-specific skills.
- Combine funding sources to offer a particular skill training.
- Re-examine assumptions about the length of training for particular occupations. For example, training for dental assistant has been compressed significantly.
- Identify occupations which require some level of training to enter, and would then involve the individual in a career ladder (e.g., dental assistant leading to a promotion to dental hygienist with fulfillment of certain requirements over time).
- Offer classes when participants can attend, including mornings, evenings, weekends--and during the daytime.
- Address personal development and work-related skills in context of a short-term occupational skill training program.
- Make plans for appropriate remediation for those with learning disabilities.

How can a proactive link to basic skills--including literacy, high school diploma/equivalency and English-as-a-Second Language--be ensured for all who need it and are involved in work activities or a job?

Committee member responses:

- In-house training at the worksite.
- Linkage of employer with local literacy councils and technical colleges, including:
  - ◊ employer knowledge of how to access these services
  - ◊ ability and willingness of Job Centers to provide space or linkage
  - ◊ other community gathering points where the services might be made available (neighborhood or community centers, etc.)
- Involvement of the Community Steering Committees to identify local resources for the W-2 agency, employers and others.
- Effective marketing of available services to the target population.

- Pre-test participant's basic skills, work with the participant over time, and then post-test to ensure that competencies have been attained to insure that they are job-ready.
- Allocate time at the worksite.
- Bring appropriate services to the neighborhoods of the target population.
- Make the hours of availability convenient.
- Make the material learned relevant, demonstrating the relationship between skills and work.
- Attach basic skills levels to targeted job opportunities (i.e., "you need to have 10th grade math and reading skills in order to be a CNC machine operator"), and share competency levels through a portfolio--making them "portable" for the employee.
- Address the need for prevention of illiteracy through the school systems, families, and community. There is a need to begin early with the children of participants, encouraging learning together.
- Make full use of all current resources:
    - ◊ Technical Colleges
    - ◊ current computer software for:
        - → English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) - Rosetta Stone
        - → Adult Basic Education (ABE)
        - → GED Preparation
        - → Job-related vocabulary and concepts
- Ensure that employers are aware of the availability of the above mentioned tools.
- Use citizenship classes as conversation practice for those in ESL classes.
- Make universe of options known to participants and employers.
- Address child care and transportation needs.

The Importance of Retention, Sustained Employment

The fifth topical area that was addressed by Committee members involved retention (employer perspective), or sustained employment (employee perspective). As with the previous areas, subgroups completed the following.

Address the importance of retention by:

- ***identifying issues which may cause individuals to leave or lose their jobs; and***
- ***recommending how W-2 agencies and their partners can effectively work to resolve these issues.***

In addressing this topic, the Committee also considered the following:

- **How to provide guidance on what educational institutions can do to be more responsive to employers and customers related to entry level training and continuing education.**

- **What can be done to make education and training available in order to promote retention and prevent or address recidivism.**

- **Identify issues which may cause individuals to leave or lose their jobs.**

Committee members compiled a list of circumstances or factors that may cause individuals to leave or lose their jobs. They were:

General Concerns

- lack of soft skills and life/survival skills
- poor work ethic
- lack of self esteem
- inability to reduce or cope with problems or stress (seemingly routine problems can be overwhelming for some), resulting in missed or substandard work
- child care and transportation problems, including:
  - ◊ inability of employees and employers to deal with non-voluntary separation from children
  - ◊ inability, unwillingness to commute
  - ◊ inability, unwillingness to relocate
- nobody to turn to with problems, or inability to admit problem
- failure to continue case management after placement
- inability to get Job Access Loans (JALs) - more money needed so that credit can be established by participant

Issues Previous to Employment

- poor role models at a young age
- culture: from family or background where nobody has ever worked full-time regularly
- criminal record

Issues at the Worksite

- inability to take direction
- Employers do not have adequate access to, or awareness of, resources and contacts that can assist them in addressing retention concerns and learning how to deal with associated problems.
- frustrations associated with receiving minimum wage, not being self-sufficient

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- hostile work environment associated with stigma attached to W-2, lack of safety, health reasons, job requirements, etc.
- fear of supervisors
- ineffective, or complete lack of, mentoring
- layoff
- "can't" perform job
- differences, feeling of being a poor "fit"
- lack of socialization on the job
- don't like the job
- don't like supervisors
- lack of communication
- lack of advancement opportunities
- language barriers
- plant closing
- lack of benefits
- insubordination
- diversity issues
- mismatch in the job, possibly resulting from misunderstanding the purpose of W-2
- poor attendance
- inability, unwillingness to work off hours (rotating shifts, flex time)

Issues at Home

- personal or family issues (domestic abuse, substance abuse, health concerns, housing instability, etc.)

Advancement Opportunities

- lack of advancement opportunities - move up at current worksite, leave for better pay, benefits, experience, etc.
- educational advancement

Recommend how W-2 agencies and their partners can effectively work to resolve these issues.

Committee members subsequently offered possible solutions to the problems outline above. There were suggestions to address:

General Concerns

- teach the basic principles of work - instill a work ethic
- continue working to address sick child/infant/2nd and 3rd shift/shift change child care challenges
- W-2 agency follow-up (probationary period)

- self-sufficiency focus now
- resolve turf issues among agencies
- pooling resources
- prompt delivery of child care subsidy by all parties
- increase TANF transportation dollars
- increase or supplement the $25 transportation assistance limit for those engaged in Food Stamp Employment & Training (FSET)
- provide transportation dollars to non-custodial parents in the Children First program
- improve the marketing of success stories of participants through the media
- effective communication between providers regarding participants
- partnerships (It takes a village)
    - ◊ employer
    - ◊ W-2 agency
    - ◊ County government
    - ◊ City Government
    - ◊ Chambers of Commerce
    - ◊ Job Centers
    - ◊ self-help groups
- offer a package of soft skills and life/survival skills training
- face the challenge of delivering array of services to low-income people who work, not the traditional paradigm
- collecting information on why people leave jobs/listening better

Issues at Worksite

- enhance mechanisms for ongoing input from employers through the Community Steering Committees (CSCs) and Children Services Networks (CSNs)
- strengthen ties between the technical colleges and employers
- English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) support in the workplace
- Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), including training supervisors to identify potential issues
- W-2 agency EAP, particularly for smaller employers
- provision of a mechanism for employers and others to determine soft skill competencies before and after training
- strategies to increase understanding of culture
- provide funding to employers in order to use their existing training slots
- employer-based training center (Chambers, PFE, Job Centers should encourage employers to share space/resources)
- second-chance training
- It is important to remember that leaving a job is not always a bad thing (sustained employment vs. job retention).
- Leaving or losing a job, even for a negative reason can be a learning experience. How can it be turned into one?
- creation of a support system at the Job Center for those dealing with non-voluntary separation, helping employers to see beyond the mistakes a worker has made

- workers with problems need to be able to recognize and access available resources
- role of employers
    - ◊ family friendly workplace
    - ◊ sharing of best practices
    - ◊ willingness to adapt to the new workforce
    - ◊ conscious effort to make the career track visible to the workforce ("if you do this, this is where you may end up")
    - ◊ communicating to the worker the importance of his/her work - recognition ("I need you here. What you do is very important in the production process because . . .")
- mentoring (sharing of "inside information"), including training and incentives
- preventative structures
    - ◊ employee hotline
    - ◊ backup assistance
    - ◊ contingency planning w/ employees
        - → FEPs
        - → employees
        - → other workers
- helping employers see the dollar value of retention
- providing conflict resolution and support to the employer when there is a problem with an employee, especially for small businesses
- sensitivity training for employers to help them deal with the "new workforce"
    - ◊ include "Generation X"

Issues at Home

- access UW-Extension funding for family training
- health insurance (employer, MA/Badgercare)
- community and employer-based ESL and literacy training, and supervisor training
- seek to make services available in the community during off hours

Advancement Opportunities

- encourage and accommodate continuing education
- build on success of employer-based training programs for jobs with good pay and benefits
- define a strategy for upward mobility, serving those who have recently entered the workforce

Upward Mobility

One of the challenges facing Wisconsin is the need to support advancement opportunities, or upward mobility, for entry level workers. Doing so will result in at least two valuable outcomes: the likelihood of people achieving self-sufficiency will increase as a result of wage progression and skill enhancement, and sufficient opportunities for those seeking entry-level positions will continue to exist as people advance through these jobs.

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development is one of several states working with Public/Private Ventures of Boston to address this issue. Wisconsin's preliminary plan is called the Upward Mobility Partnership. It is designed to foster and reward the creation of partnerships among state agencies, technical colleges and employers that:

- enable economically disadvantaged workers--including those who are currently unemployed and the working poor--to gain the skills they need to be self-sufficient;
- engage employers in the design and implementation of these programs, using labor market information to design training programs based on labor shortages;
- develop effective ways of providing post-employment support to help ensure that trained workers stay employed;
- increase the supply of skilled workers; and
- raise job seeker awareness of options for lifelong skills-building and career development.

The Upward Mobility Partnership would serve those in the workforce who have been unable to achieve significant wage progression to the point of self-sufficiency. Several factors contribute to making this a timely opportunity:

✓ a significant, statewide labor shortage;
✓ a mismatch between employer needs and worker skills levels;
✓ emerging one-stop partnerships that include employers, state and local agencies, technical colleges, Job Centers and other local partners;
✓ a strong technical college system;
✓ an opportunity to complement Wisconsin Works (W-2) with opportunities to advance once placed.

This proposal is a workforce development strategy because it would provide upward mobility for low-income, incumbent workers trying to increase their skills in order to

advance in the workplace. It is also an economic development strategy in that it would help employers find the workers they need, addressing local labor shortages.

Committee member consensus was that this is a necessary initiative.

Continuing Education and the Importance of Lifelong Learning

Given the reality that initial placement does not always equal self-sufficiency, or guarantee sustained employment, the importance of continuing education and lifelong learning is clear. Everyone is capable of improving their skills.

The most vulnerable are generally those without a high school diploma or the equivalent. Giving these individuals every opportunity to reach this milestone should be a priority. W-2 provides supports for those working toward this and other goals.

Identify what W-2 agencies and their partners can do to facilitate post-employment occupational training and continuing education.

In addressing this topic the Committee considered the following:

- **How to build self-esteem, and counteract lifelong discouragement.**
- **How to connect children and parents to lifelong learning.**
- **How to define and focus on nurturing mentoring for workers and employers.**
- **How lifelong learning can be emphasized when moving participants into the workforce, factoring in career development and encouraging workers to seek out "better" jobs that best fit them.**
- **How to promote proactive approaches to counseling and develop an "early alert system.**
- **Methods for the provision of career development in soft skills training, made available in the workplace, in job centers, etc.**
- **Ways to encourage the commitment of a full-time equivalent mentor by employers, including education for current employees.**
- **Explore opportunities for individuals with barriers, such as limited English proficiency, to reach self sufficiency.**

Committee Responses

Committee members offered many ideas with regard to the issue of continuing education and lifelong learning. These responses can most appropriately be grouped in the following way:

- General suggestions
- Suggestions for W-2 Agencies and/or Job Centers
- Suggestions for Employers
- Suggestions for Partnerships which include:
    - ◊ W-2 Agencies/Job Centers and Education Providers
    - ◊ W-2 Agencies/Job Centers and Employers
    - ◊ W-2 Agencies/Job Centers, Employers and Education Providers (e.g., technical colleges, family literacy programs including Even Start, and local literacy programs)

These groupings, however, are not intended to draw rigid lines. Partnerships can be formed in any number of ways, and ideas for their formation should not be limited.

General

- provide quicker response to grants administered, or applied for, by DWD
    - ◊ Welfare to Work
    - ◊ transportation
- increase staff, funding, and partnerships to increase services
- reduce wait for those moving to unsubsidized employment to receive child care subsidy during education and training activities (e.g., GED, ABE, skills training, etc.)
- reduce timeframe for Employment Skills Advancement Program (ESAP) scholarship funding for education and training delivered through various strategies - worksite, technical college, CBO, technology, etc.

W-2 Agencies and/or Job Centers

- Develop Job Centers to better keep in touch with people
- extend hours for Job Centers, open weekends and evenings
- conduct outreach to/partnership with alternative schools and community based organizations (local literacy councils and other CBOs), both education and non-education related
- link participants to family literacy programs
- expand case management services to build education and training opportunities
- strengthen partnerships between Job Centers and Community Steering Committees
- develop partnerships with child support agencies
- strengthen partnership with UW-Extension
- increase transportation availability for education and training, especially in rural areas
- dedicate staff/liaison to connect people to continuing education

- initiate family educational assessment to identify needs of parent and children
- integrate services for persons with disabilities (not necessarily DVR eligible) through Job Centers, increase opportunities for assessment
- develop strategy to reduce potential for persons with disabilities to "fall through the cracks"
- integrate behavioral health services through partnerships
- connect Trial Job opportunities to enhance occupational skills/establish a specific initiative
- utilize Trial Jobs to increase opportunities for family supporting jobs
- strengthen education and training development component of the Employability Plan (EP) with client input/ownership
- specific "tryout" option for employers to assess employment potential for persons with disabilities of all types and levels
- develop partnerships with companies and organizations who do on-the-job assessment and training of persons with disabilities who want to work; utilize Trial Jobs, as well as W-2 training
- increase employer incentives for additional education and training
- provide post-employment follow-up
- emphasize lifelong learning in the first meeting, and continue to do so with every partner at every step in the process (i.e., W-2 agency, FEP, employer, etc.)
- develop family mentor program, available on a strictly voluntary basis

Employers

- encourage collaborations among local employers to provide industry-based "generic" certificates
- support mentors in the workplace
- conduct worksite training, if possible, including:
    - ◊ making it attractive (i.e., flexible and convenient location/hours)
    - ◊ cooperative training of supervisors at worksite to be aware of skills that could benefit another area in the company
    - ◊ peer support
- encourage employers to offer tuition reimbursement
- support peer counseling sessions
- give information about resources during new employee orientation
- train supervisors to identify problems and refer employees to EAPs and community resources

Partnerships

Committee members also identified many opportunities for various groups to form partnerships that will best meet the needs of participants. There were a number of combinations in which groups may work together, including:

W-2 Agencies/Job Centers and Education Providers

- develop and provide credit based and non-credit based training for life skills and life management
- build on technical college outreach programs
- utilize technology for continuing education
    - ◊ TV
    - ◊ videos
    - ◊ compressed videos
    - ◊ computers
- make video equipment available
- foster partnerships with employers that identify strategies for providing time for education and training
- utilize and promote Job Center "Resource Rooms" to connect people to continuing education and the technical colleges
- improve outreach and communication to participants and families based on what works for reaching them
- partner with employers to provide release time for education and training, job related and continuing education
- develop technical assistance program to help employers identify needs and ways to collaborate on a program to provide educational services (e.g., GED courses)
- technical assistance model should be adaptable to various sized employers and industries
- address education and training needs and opportunities for all W-2 eligible and TANF eligible participants
- utilize Children's Resource Networks (CSNs) to promote educational resources
- work with K-12 system--particularly counselors--to put emphasis on lifelong learning which serves children and adults
- use video technology whenever possible
- provide services that make training and education more realistic, including:
    - ◊ training for parent and child at same time/place (pre-school, night school)
    - ◊ child-focused activity at training location

W-2 Agencies/Job Centers and Employers

- expand mentoring to include mentors from all walks of life, not just the workplace (e.g., service groups, seniors and retired, faith-based organizations, etc.)
- develop mentor training course

W-2 Agencies/Job Centers, Employers and Education Providers

- conduct brown bag education or training sessions at the worksite
- make soft skills relevant to worksite/job, and offer training at the worksite
- emphasize career development from day one
- increase access and availability of services

- specifically define the value and process of lifelong learning as it relates to job advancement within the workplace and/or the education and training location -- for both parent and child

Governor's Wisconsin Works (W-2)
Education and Training Committee

Recommendations and Action Plan

Section Four

Recommendations and Action Plan

In this report, the Governor's Wisconsin Works (W-2) Education and Training Committee has:

- presented basic demographic information for the current W-2 population;
- clarified the W-2 education and training philosophy;
- outlined the provisions made for education and training under current W-2 policy;
- framed several practical applications of current policy, and;
- discussed key issues affecting Wisconsin's ability to succeed in building a stable and productive workforce for the future, moving citizens into the workforce and supporting them when they get there.

Having done so, Committee members reached consensus on a a series of recommendations intended to enhance education and training options under W-2.

PROMOTE AND EMPHASIZE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES UNDER WISCONSIN WORKS (W-2), INCLUDING OPPORTUNITIES THAT MAY BE ENHANCED AS A RESULT OF THIS REPORT.

★ Conduct a seminar for all W-2 agencies, which involves other important partners (e.g., Community Steering Committees, employers), making them aware of the findings of this report, and of proven models for providing education and training. Where possible, seminars should involve members of the Governor's W-2 Education and Training Committee.

★ Expand W-2 case management training to emphasize appropriate education and training activities for participants, focusing on basic education and soft skills training and introducing strategies to promote continuing education and training.

★ Enhance the education and training section of the W-2 Case Management Resource Guide, emphasizing the importance of education, training and lifelong learning for all low-income workers who are W-2 eligible.

★ Increase awareness of opportunities to not only create customized training in conjunction with the technical colleges, but also to take advantage of existing occupational courses (e.g., Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training, welding, etc.).

EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF EARNING A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR THE EQUIVALENT FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOT DONE SO.

★ Encourage W-2 agencies, in promoting case management follow-up services for those progressing from subsidized W-2 employment positions (up to 6 months), to:

- cover any direct costs of GED/HSED classes and testing;
- document an Employability Plan which emphasizes GED/HSED completion; and
- assist in securing a child care subsidy for the time the individual attends classes.

★ Raise awareness that, when necessary, formal client assessment may be done to determine current educational level and needs, helping to identify those not within reach of earning a high school equivalency.

★ Involve local literacy councils in the provision of literacy and English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) tutoring, including a presence at the Job Center or W-2 agency, or a method for making direct referrals.

★ Require W-2 agencies to prepare an Employability Plan for those who are in Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) or case management only, and who do not possess a high school diploma or the equivalent. [1]

★ Direct W-2 agencies to prepare and implement a strategy to raise awareness of education and training opportunities available to all low-income working people who are W-2 eligible, including the availability of child care subsidies for time spent in education and training .

★ Submit a legislative language change to the 1999-2000 legislature that will eliminate the 9 month waiting period for child care subsidies for those in unsubsidized employment wishing to become involved in, or stay involved in, GED/HSED classes, basic education or English-as-a-Second Language tutoring.[2]

★ Require W-2 agencies to document a specific education/career plan as part of the larger Employability Plan for those in W-2 employment positions.[3]

EMPHASIZE THE NEED FOR W-2 AGENCIES TO FORGE BROAD-BASED PARTNERSHIPS WITH EMPLOYERS, EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS AND ALL AVAILABLE FUNDING SOURCES TO ESTABLISH QUALITY SHORT-TERM, SKILL SPECIFIC TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.

- ★ Build on the initial success many employers and participants have enjoyed as a result of broad-based training partnerships, challenging more employers to initiate or enter into these partnerships (Please see the Tecumseh example in Section 3 for an example of this type of partnership).

- ★ Encourage the technical colleges, in working with employers and W-2 agencies, to increase system-wide sharing of curricula for customized, short-term training for skills such as welding, machine operation, Certified Nursing Assistant, and basic manufacturing that meet specific employer needs.

- ★ Encourage W-2 agencies and Job Centers to seek opportunities that will increase the availability and flexibility of quality child care sites with respect to location and hours, and will create transportation options for participants at work or in training.

- ★ Encourage W-2 agencies and partners to increase education and training opportunities at the worksite, increasing availability at times convenient to the employer and employee.

- ★ Encourage W-2 agencies and Job Centers to place a renewed emphasis on single point of contact services for employers, including thorough follow-up.

- ★ Increase utilization of Business & Industry Services, available at every Wisconsin technical college, in assessing occupational skill requirements when packaging and delivering customized training services.

STRENGTHEN SUPPORT FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING.

- ★ Submit a legislative language change to the 1999-2000 legislature that will modify the matching requirement for the Employment Skills Advancement Program (ESAP), making the participant responsible for securing a *single* match from any available source.

- ★ Encourage W-2 Agencies to track participants moving to unsubsidized employment by documenting employment and educational progress in the Client Assistance for Re-employment and Economic Support (CARES) system at 3, 6 and 12 month intervals, at a minimum.

★ Direct W-2 agencies to foster effective partnerships with the technical colleges, UW-Extension, volunteer literacy providers and other education and training providers who deliver adult basic education, literacy and English-as-a-Second Language tutoring, post-employment skills training, and continuing education opportunities.

★ Support and encourage employers in either implementing on-site, or creating a linkage to off-site, continuing education programs.

★ Encourage local W-2 agencies and their partners to innovate in expanding the availability and flexibility of child care and education and training opportunities at the Job Centers and in community centers or other neighborhood locations.[3]

★ Direct W-2 agencies to establish a plan, in coordination with their Community Steering Committees, to identify ongoing funding sources for the Employment Skills Advancement Program (ESAP) matching grant.[3]

★ Submit a legislative language change to the 1999-2000 legislature that will reduce the waiting period from 9 months to 6 months for child care subsidies and the Employment Skills Advancement Program (ESAP) for those in unsubsidized employment who wish to participate in education and training programs.[2]

★ Create a one-stop shop for information and referrals on continuing education opportunities and financial aid, to be made available in Job Center resource rooms.

★ Direct the Department of Workforce Development to develop a model in partnership with the technical colleges, UW-Extension, Job Centers and employers, that increases upward mobility of the low-income workforce.

FOSTER DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIES THAT ADDRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF RETENTION.

★ Encourage a collaboration of technical colleges, other education and training providers, and W-2 agencies to explore, with employers, the development of a statewide initiative that defines a set of soft skills needed to succeed in the workplace, and introduces an evaluation instrument to measure growth and the value--to employers and workers--of teaching those skills.

★ Assist W-2 agencies in supporting proven employer strategies, such as mentoring and Employee Assistance Programs, that support employees new to the workplace and reduce turnover.

[1] Requires an Administrative Rule change.
[2] Requires a statutory language change.
[3] Requires a policy directive.

Action Plan

In order to ensure the successful implemention of their recommendations, members of the Governor's Wisconsin Works (W-2) Education and Training Committee outlined several steps that must be taken.

✓ The Committee Co-Chairs will identify an individual to coordinate and monitor implementation of the recommendations.

✓ The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) will take the lead on training initiatives recommended (enhanced W-2 case manager training and statewide seminars).

✓ DWD will devise a marketing strategy for this report.

✓ Each W-2 agency will be expected to address these recommendations in the adjusted, post-implementation service delivery plans required of them.

✓ Any legislative language changes or budget initiatives necessary to implement recommendations will be prepared for action by the 1999-2000 legislature.

✓ DWD will proceed with implementation of all recommendations which can be addressed within current legislative or budget constraints.

✓ A six month review will be conducted by available Committee members to determine the progress made toward full implementation of the recommendations.